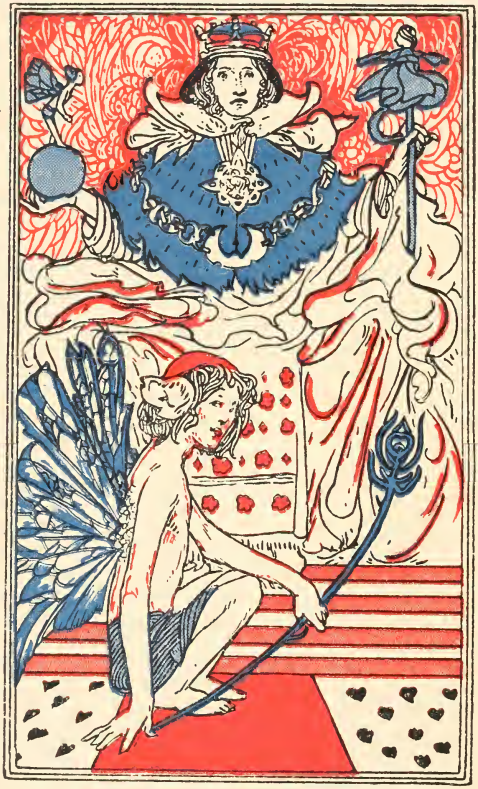

The Reign of
KING OBERON

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/reignofkingobero00jerr

THE REIGN OF KING OBERON.



The True Annals of Fairyland

The Reign of KING OBERON

Edited by
Walter Jerrold
Illustrated by
Charles Robinson

London & Toronto
J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd.
New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
D151549
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.



PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

398
T





NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

398
5



Preface

My Dear Young Folks,

Here are some more stories from the wonderful Annals of Fairyland. How they were first told at the Court of King Oberon, and how they came to be recorded you will learn at the beginning, and much as you love the little people you will, I think, like them even better when you have learned all that this volume has to tell. Mr William Canton has told you the stories properly belonging to "The Reign of King Herla," Mr J. M. Gibbon showed you how a famous merry old soul and his court found entertainment in story-telling in "The Reign of King Cole," and now it is my pleasant privilege to put before you, from the inexhaustible Annals, those tales which properly belong to "The Reign of King Oberon."

Preface

Of course you may have already met some of these stories before, for most of our best writers have been made free of Fairyland and have written of the wonderful things they learned there; Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm have long since been famous for all that they have told of their visits to the marvellous land, and some of the stories which they brought back will be found to belong to the reign of Oberon and Titania, while others have been told by Ben Jonson, by Thomas Hood, by Charles Perrault, by Thomas Crofton Croker, by Douglas Jerrold, by Benjamin Thorpe and by Sir George Dasent —but old or new all have the perennial youthfulness of the fairies themselves, and as long as we can truly enjoy them we shall not grow old.

THE EDITOR.





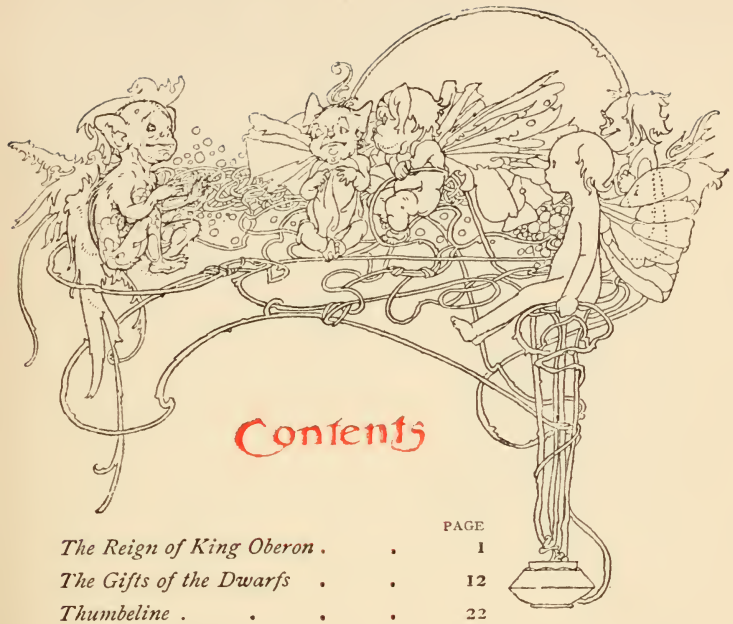
Dedication
To My Children.

ONE time I chanced upon a fairy ring
Wherein Titania's lieges held their court,
And watched the fairies merrily disport,
While sweetly the near nightingale did fling
His magic music over everything,
Till all in me was to that wonder wrought
Where feeling reaches heights unknown to thought,
Where spirit unto spirit seems to sing.

My heart ached when too soon one fairy went
To rest 'mid flow'rs, and yet it came to pass
In that green world there seemed no room for fears,—
By dancing joys fresh joy to me was sent,
Though ever more that vacant place there was,
When dews befell, and in my eyes were tears.

W. J.





Contents

	PAGE
The Reign of King Oberon	1
The Gifts of the Dwarfs	12
Thumbeline	22
The Young Piper	37
Rumpel-Stilts-Ken	48
Karl Katz	55
The Wild Swans	65
The Herd-Boy	84
The Nose-Tree	99
The Pranks of Robin Goodfellow	109
The Golden Lantern, the Golden Goat, and the Golden Cloak	117
Hansel and Grethel	129
The Magic Bottles	144
Princess Rosette	157
The Bear and Skrattel	179
The Goose-Girl	193

Contents

	PAGE
The Water of Life	203
The Troll's Hammer	215
The Three Little Crones, each with Something big	223
The Queen's Song	232
The Three Sneezes	234
The Elf-Hill	243
Riquet with the Tuft	254
The Benevolent Frog	265
Allwise the Dwarf	298
The Fairy at the Well	305
Dolly, draw the Cake	313
The Little Glass Shoe	315
East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon	322
Queen Mab	336





List of Illustrations.

	PAGE
King Oberon Coloured frontispiece	
Queen Titania .	1
A small Indian prince had been stolen .	2
And a fairy baby left in its place .	3
"I do but beg a little changeling boy"	4
The Fairyland buys not the child of me"	5
At once all the little people were hurrying to obey the monarch's behest	8-9
The Scandinavian dwarf	11
His long red beard waved in the sky as he drove in his goat-drawn chariot	12
Loki descending into the cave of the dwarfs . .	17
Loki's punishment	20
The fairy prince	21
Right in the middle of the flower sat a little tiny girl .	22
The old toad made a deep curtsey in the water before her	24
Every snowflake which fell upon her was like a shovelful on one of us	27
It was not dead but lay in a swoon . . .	30
Fiddle-de-dee said the field mouse . . .	32
What was her astonishment to find a little man in the middle of the flower	35

Illustrations

	PAGE
The Irish fairy	36
A big laughing potato in their hands	37
Sitting cross-legged on the top of a wave	44
Jumped clean off the cart over the bridge down into the water	45
The gnome	47
The miller's daughter	48
The king came in the morning	51
Dashed his right foot so deep into the floor that he was forced to lay hold of it with both hands to pull it out	53
The gnome	54
On he went scrambling	55
Twelve strange old figures amusing themselves very sedately with a game of nine-pins	59
The strange-looking man with the long grey beard	63
Fairy Peaseblossom	64
He laid his head against her bosom	65
The Saviour looked down and little angels' heads peeped out above His head and under His arms	69
Even on her way to her death she could not abandon her unfinished work	81
Moth	83
He found it was a pair of very small shoes	84
The young herdsman advanced boldly	93
Puck	98
Tailpiece	97
Three poor soldiers set out on their road home	99
Still it grew and grew	103
"We will follow it and find its owner"	105
As for the doctor, he put on the cloak, and was soon with his two brothers	108
Robin Goodfellow	108
The pranks of Robin Goodfellow	109
"What revel rout"	110
"There's not a hag or ghost shall wag"	111
"And call them on with me to roam thro' lakes, thro' bogs"	112

Illustrations

PAGE

"The maids I kiss" 113

"I them affright with pinchings, dreams, and ho, ho, ho!" 114

"And elf in bed, we leave instead" . . . 115

"So vale, vale, ho, ho, ho!" 116

The Swedish Troll 116

There appeared a strong light as of fire . . . 117

Pinkel seized her by the feet and cast her headlong into the water 121

They went again before the king 125

His brothers continued to be helpers in the stable as long as they lived 128

The German Fairy 128

On one of the branches sat a little child . . . 129

Lingering behind to drop one pebble after another along the road 131

I will eat off the roof for my share 135

Fastened him up in a coop 137

Tailpiece 142

Robin Starveling 143

Mick found that he hadn't enough half to pay the rent . 144

"Here take the bottle" 148

Mick went home muttering prayers and holding fast the bottle 149

In a moment the landlord was tumbled on the floor, and all were roaring and sprawling and shrieking . 153

In jumped the men into the new bottle . . . 156

The French Fay 156

"Welcome! what would you ask of me?" . . . 157

Fretillon started barking at them 168

Fretillon 177

The Norwegian Dwarf 178

Away they went 179

He lets them loose 182

The bear would throw him in the air . . . 187

The elf was one moment on the bear's back . . 191

Illustrations

PAGE

The second German Fairy 192
She set off on her journey 193
Falada, Falada, there thou hangest . . . 197
Tailpiece 201
The fairy sat down again 202
He was found to abide spellbound 203
He came to a room where a beautiful lady sat upon a couch 208-9
The friendly dwarf with the sugar-loaf hat . . 214
The dwarf from Sweden 214
Niels wandered forth 215
See here is a hammer 217
The blade struck him in the face 222
The Norwegian Fairy 222
The three little crones 223
Mother Bigfoot 228
The Queen was so enraged that her eyes flashed fury . 229
Nymphidia 231
Round about, round about, in a fine ring-a . . 232
Bottom 233
He took the glass and drained it 234
Billy found himself sitting on horseback the wrong way 237
Billy danced the Rinka 241
The Danish Elf 242
Some lizards were running in and out of the clefts in an old tree 243
Preserve us how nimble they were on their legs . . 249
"*I like the boys better*," *said the earthworm* . . 252
The French Fay 253
It was doubted whether his form were really human . 254
There came forth a band of cooks 259
Tailpiece 263
The French Fay 264
The cap of roses 265
Placing the queen on her back she carried her to her cave 268
A little princess had been born to her 275

Illustrations

PAGE

The audience 280-1
A dragon half a league long coming through the air . 293
Tailpiece 296
The Scandinavian Dwarf 297
Thou art pale about the nose 298
Allwise the dwarf and Thor 301
The dwarf was suddenly turned into a figure of stone . 304
Quick 304
She held it up to the woman 305
How is this my daughter 307
Tailpiece 309
Pink 310
They put the cake into the oven 312
St Dolly slept on a flour sack 313
Tailpiece 313
Seated himself firmly on the stool 314
He ran away with it 315
Tailpiece 318
John understood too well the nature of his crop . . 319
The dwarf from the North 321
What should he see but a big white bear . . . 322
He was so worn out he had to rest many days before he could get home again 331
Queen Titania 335
But when a bad child goes to bed 336
And from the moon she flutters down . . . 337
Tailpiece 338
Tailpiece 339



THE TRUE ANNALS OF FAIRYLA



OBERON KING OF FAIRIES

THE REIGN OF KING OBERON

THE REIGN OF KING OBERON.



IN all the annals of Fairyland nothing is more wonderful — and the annals are found in many hundreds of volumes — than that chapter which tells of the reign of the true fairy King Oberon and his beautiful wife Titania, who is sometimes called Queen Mab. Marvellous are the doings of Oberon's little subjects in every land — good fairies and bad fairies, dwarfs, elves and sprites, brownies, pixies and gnomes, pucks, trolls and kobolds and Robin Goodfellow — and marvellous

The Reign of King Oberon





are the tales which have been told of them by travellers in the fairy realms.

Now, once upon a time there was sadness throughout the whole kingdom of Oberon—and his kingdom has no boundaries — because of a quarrel which had arisen between the king and the queen. It was a very small matter to begin with, but the king was a king and did not think it consorted with his dignity as such that his will should not be law, while the lovely Queen Titania thought that even the powerful king of the fairies should give way to her wishes. A small Indian prince, a dusky child, son of a mighty monarch of the East, had been stolen and a fairy baby left in its place and King Oberon wanted the changeling to be one of the knights of his train, while Queen Titania insisted on keeping him as one of her pages. Long and bitter was the quarrel but neither



"I do but beg a little changeling boy"

king nor queen would give way, and at length they parted and half the fairies marched off under the banner of the king and half under the banner of the queen.

Now you know of course that it was the fairies that looked after all things, the flowers and the trees, the streams and lakes, the little birds and beasts, and even —though they might not be aware of it—after the doings of many men and women; thus when it befel that their king and queen quarrelled and all the fairies rallied to their separate courts everything was neglected: the corn died unripened, the grass withered in the fields, so that the flocks and herds starved, the summers were cold and wet, the winters were sickly and mild, and many good men, women and children lost their tempers and became troublesome and unhappy they knew not why, and certainly never imagined that it was all because of a quarrel between the rulers of the world-wide kingdom of Fairy.

For a long time it seemed as though the king and queen would not be reconciled. When they met Oberon would say, "I do but beg a little changeling boy to be my henchman"; and Titania would reply, "Set your heart at rest, the Fairyland buys not the child of me." And again



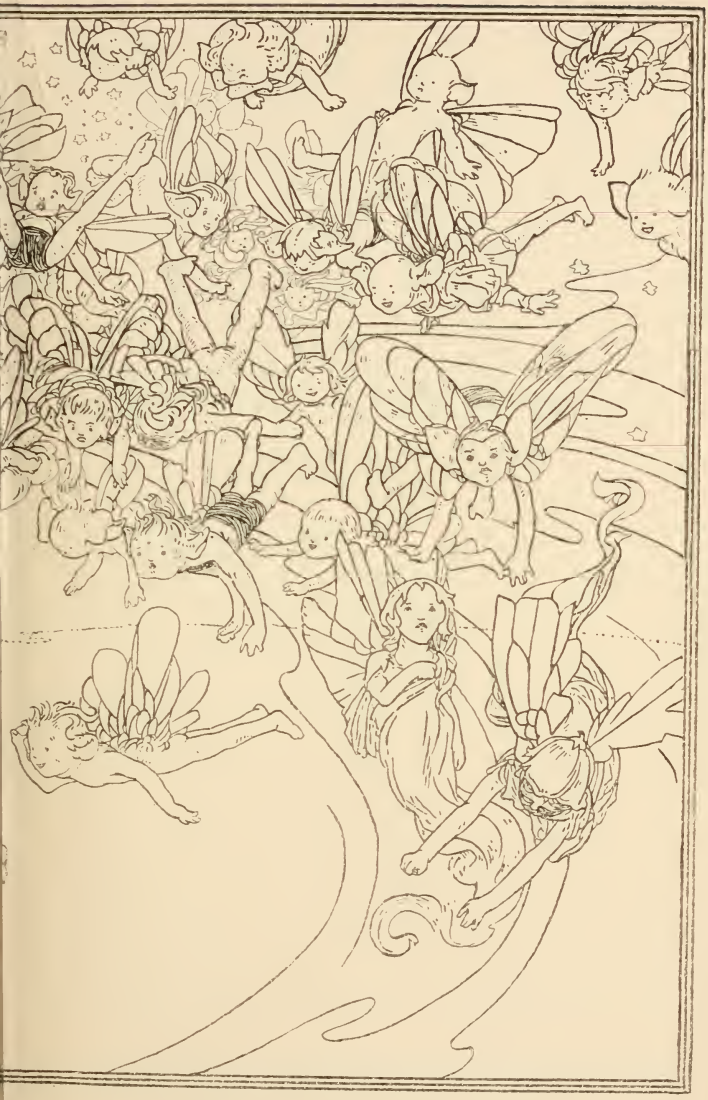
"The Fairyland boys not the child of me."

the king would say, "Give me the boy and I will go with thee"; and the queen would answer, "Not for thy fairy kingdom." Luckily Oberon by means of his fairy-arts was finally able to win his way and gain the little changeling for his retinue, the king and queen were reconciled and all the fairies returned to their happy work: the crops and grass revived, flowers bloomed everywhere, the birds sang, summer was once more warm and sunny, and winter once more white and frosty, while men, women and children suddenly regained their good tempers, knowing as little why they did so as why they had lost them. All the world was indeed once again bright and happy as it should be. Great was the rejoicing throughout the realm of Fairyland, and greater still it became when King Oberon summoned to his court all his subjects from all parts of the world to celebrate the reconciliation. Quick as thought his wish was made known by Ariel and Puck his ready messengers, and at once all the little people were hurrying to obey the monarch's behest, and within the forty minutes which Puck takes to put a girdle round about the earth all had assembled. Then there was such a sight of wonderful splendour as would have astonished human eyes: there

in beautiful colours were fairies from the flowers and the rainbows, from streams and woodland, elves, dwarfs and gnomes from caves under the earth where gold is hammered and precious stones are made; there were pixies and brownies and quaint little sprites innumerable; there was Cinderella's fairy godmother, and there was Allwise the dwarf who wanted to marry Thor's daughter; there was Robin Goodfellow, and there was Ariel; there were Titania's attendant fairies Peaseblossom and Cobweb, Moth and Mustardseed; there was Thumbeline and the fairy Prince her husband, and Hop-o-my-Thumb, and Thumbling; there were the King's courtiers—Perriwiggin, Perriwincle, Puck, Hob-Goblin, Tomalin and Tom-Thumb; there were the Queen's maids of honour—Hop, Mop, Drop, Pip, Drip, Skip, Tub, Tib, Tick, Pink, Pin, Quick, Gill, Un, Tit, Wap, Win, Wit with Nymphidia the mother of the maids—but if I were to give you a list of all the different fairies who gathered about Oberon's court I should fill up this book and leave no room for any stories or for Mr Robinson's illustrations.

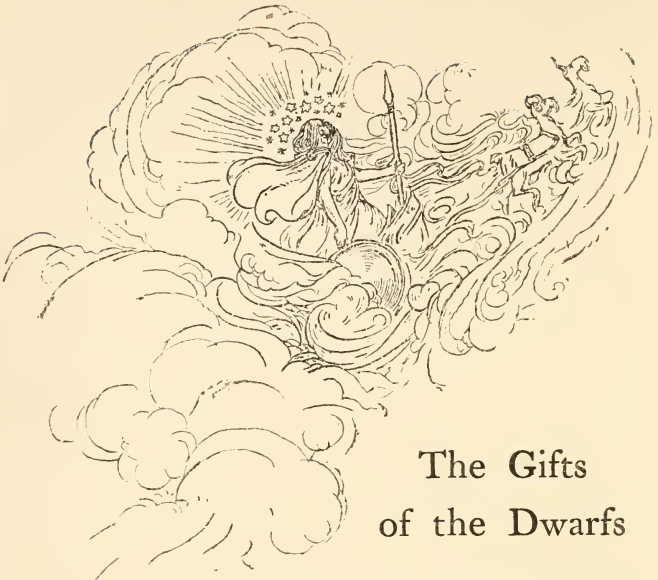
There were, to put it shortly, all the fairies that ever lived, all the fairies that you ever knew, told of in tales or dreamed of in dreams, and a marvellous sight it would have been if we could have seen them gathered about the fairy palace of King Oberon. Everyone knew everyone else, and many were the stories told of elfish mischief and of benefits done to good people by their attendant fairies. Oberon and Titania passing along, talking to their happy subjects and attended by the changeling boy who had caused so much trouble, overheard one of these stories, and turning to his queen, the king said: "My Titania, shall we not hear some of these stories which our people can tell of their doings with men, women and children in the world of big folk?" Titania readily agreed that it would be delightful; and elfin trumpeters passed amid the multitude and blew their horns, and said that all were to arrange themselves in the great Fairy Ring and were to be prepared to tell stories until the dawn. Then there





was a pretty hustling and bustling of merry crowds jostling and soon all were arranged in circles about the great Fairy Ring, and Oberon and Titania ascended a throne which was beautifully formed of sweet-scented flowers that never faded. At the foot of the throne a stool was placed, and on it the story-tellers were to sit while amusing the Court; such was the magic of the circle that though the fairy speaking only addressed himself to the king and queen, his voice was heard even by the fairies furthest away, on the very outermost part of the ring. Happily for us the changeling boy was there sitting on the steps of the throne, and when, years afterwards, he found his way back to his father's kingdom, he wrote down all the wonderful stories he had heard at the Court of King Oberon, and they have since been translated into many tongues by many writers, so that some of them will no doubt be familiar to you. Here, however, we have the stories just as Oberon's changeling wrote them down, and the first story was repeated by a Scandinavian dwarf out of the cold north, who told how it was that the great hero Thor got





The Gifts of the Dwarfs

THOR was, as you know, the strongest and noblest of the great giants of the north. He was tall in stature and had fiery brown eyes, from which the light flashed like lightning, while his long red beard waved through the sky as he drove in his goat-drawn chariot. Brilliant sparks flew from the hoofs and teeth of the two goats, while a crown of bright stars shone above Thor's head. When he was angered the wheels of his chariot rumbled and crashed their passage through the air, until men trembled and hid, telling each other that Thor had gone to battle with the Rime-giants or other of his enemies. Now Thor's wife was named Sib, and she was most beautiful to look upon. Her soft, browny-gold hair was so long and thick that it would cover her from the crown of her head to her little feet, and her deep brown eyes looked into the faces of her friends as those of a mother look into the face of

her child. Loki, the mischief-maker among the giants, often looked at Sib and longed to do her some evil, for he was jealous, thinking that it was not right that she should be praised and loved by everyone; go where he would he could find no one who did not speak well of her.

It happened one day when the summer was nearly gone that Loki found Sib alone and sleeping on a bank near the river, so he drew his knife, and creeping softly nearer and nearer, cut off her beautiful flowing hair quite close to her head. Then he joyfully rushed away and strewed it far and wide over the whole earth, so that it became no longer living and golden but faded and turned a dull colour as the winds blew it about and the rains beat upon it, and crushed it in between the rocks and stones. When Sib awoke and was about to push the hair from her face, she felt that something was wrong. Wonderingly she ran to the water and looking at her reflection in the clear depths, saw that nothing but a short stubble stood up all over her head. All her lovely hair was gone! Only one would have dared to treat her so badly, and in her grief and anger she called upon Thor to come to her aid.

Loki had of course fled and was hiding far away in another country among the rocks when he heard the distant rumblings of thunder, and tried to shrink deeper into the crevices between the great stones, but the awful sound grew louder, and at last the angry flash from Thor's eyes darted to the very spot where the mischievous one lay. Then Thor pulled him out and shook him from side to side in his enormous hands, and would have crushed his bones upon the hard rocks had not Loki in great terror asked what good his death would do, for it certainly would not bring Sib's hair back. Then Thor set the mischief-maker on his feet, though still keeping a tight hold on him, and asked what he would do to repair the evil which he had done. Loki promptly answered that he would go down into the mountains to the dwarfs, and get Iwald's sons to make some golden

hair for Sib, as good as that which he had destroyed. Now Iwald had had seven sons, and these all lived deep below the earth in the great caverns which lie below the mountains, and these sons were small and dark; they did not like the daylight for they were little dwarfs who could see best without the sun to dazzle their eyes; they knew where gold and silver grew, and they could tell where to find beautiful shining stones, which were red, and white, and yellow, and green; they knew the way all over the world by running through caverns and passages under the mountains, and wherever they could find precious stones or metals they built a furnace, and made an anvil, and hammer and bellows, and everything that was wanted in a smithy; for they knew how to fashion the most wonderful things from gold and iron and stone, and they had knowledge which made them more powerful than the people who lived above the ground.

Thor let the mischief-maker go to get the help of the dwarfs to repair the wrong which he had done, and Loki sought about the mountain-side until he found a hole which would lead him into Iwald's cave, and then he promptly dropped into it. There in a dark cave gleaming with many sparkling lights he went to the two cleverest dwarfs who were named Sindri and Brok, and told them what it was he wanted, adding that he would be in sore trouble with Thor if they could not help him. Now Sindri and Brok knew all about Loki perfectly well; they knew all about his mischievous ways and the evil he so often wrought, but as they liked Thor and Sib they were willing to give the help which was asked of them. Thus without more ado, for these dwarfs never wasted their words, Sindri and Brok began their work.

Huge blocks of earth-brown stone were cast into the furnace until they were in a white heat, when drop by drop red gold trickled from them into the ashes. This was all gathered together, and the glistening heap taken to the dwarf women, who, crushing it in their hands before it had

hardened, drew it out upon their wheels, and spun it into fine soft hair. While they were doing this Brok sought amongst his treasures until he found the blue of the ocean and the tough inner pith of an underground tree; these, with other things, were cast into the furnace, and afterwards beaten with his hammer. As the rhythmic strokes fell, the women sang a song which was like the voice of a strong, steady wind. Then when this work was finished, the smith drew forth a little ship, which was carefully placed on one side. The third time the dwarf went to a dark corner, and brought out an ugly bent bar of iron, and this, with two feathers from the wings of the wind, was heated to melting whiteness, and wrought with great cunning and extreme care, for it was to be a spear for Odin himself, the greatest of all the Heroes.

Then Brok and Sindri called Loki to them and giving him these three things bade him hasten back to the Heroes at Asgard and appease their wrath. Loki, however, was already beginning to feel sorry that he had been so successful; he liked teasing folk but he did not like having to atone for his mischief afterwards. He turned the marvellous gifts over scornfully in his hands, and said that he did not see anything very wonderful in *them*; then, looking at Sindri he added, "However, Brok has hammered them very skilfully, and I will wager my head that you could not make anything better."

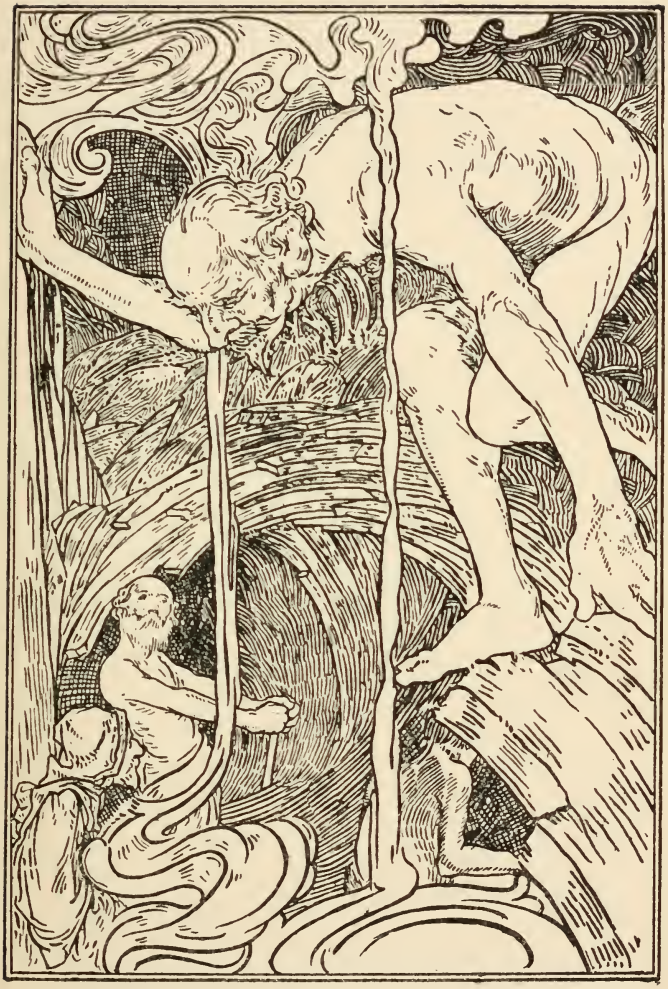
Now the brother dwarfs had not by any means expected gratitude, but neither had they expected any such rudeness as this, so Sindri determined to give Loki a lesson. Going to one corner of the smithy he picked up a pig-skin and taking the hammer in his hands, told his brother to blow steadily, neither to falter nor to fail until he passed the word that the work was done. Then with strength and gentleness he wrought with his tools, having cast nothing into the heat but the pig-skin; with mighty blows and delicate touches he brought thickness and substance into it, until a boar looked at him from the flames. Loki, fearing for his head, changed himself into an enormous

forest fly, and settling upon Brok's hand, stung with vicious fury; but the dwarf would not trouble to brush the fly away, and steadily moved the bellows until his brother called to him to stop, when they drew forth a strong flexible boar whose bristles were of the finest gold.

Then without saying anything or paying any attention to the spiteful words which Loki kept uttering, Sindri chose from a heap of gold the most solid lump he could find and flung it into the white flames. Thrice it was heated and cooled, and the dark elf turned it and worked it with wonderful skill, and in the glow Loki saw a broad red ring, which seemed to live and move. Again he tried to spoil the work as a fly, and bit deeply into Brok's neck, but Brok would not so much as raise his hand to rid him of the pain. When the ring was finally laid to cool, so marvellously had it been wrought that from it each ninth night would fall eight rings as beautiful as itself.

Now came the last test of Sindri's cunning. He cast into the furnace a piece of fine iron, and told Brok his hand must neither tremble nor stay, or the whole of their work would be useless. Then with wild songs of strength upon his lips he hammered and tapped, until those who were in the cave felt that they were out among the roaring waves; they could hear the ice mountains grind and crash to pieces, and the thunder of Thor's chariot wheels rushing through the heavens. A frenzied horror seized upon Loki's mind. If these wretched dwarfs were going to make anything to add to Thor's strength he knew that it would be his own ruin. So, changing himself to a hornet, he sprang upon the forehead of Brok, and dug so fiercely into his eyelids that the blood trickled down and blinded him. Then the dwarf let go of the bellows for one moment to clear his eyes, and Sindri cried out that what lay in the furnace came near to being spoiled, and with that he took a red-hot hammer up with his tongs. It was neither pretty, nor particularly large, while the handle was an inch too short because of Loki's spite.

Then Brok and Loki set out for Asgard, Loki carrying



the three wonderful things which had been given to him, while Brok carried the three marvels which Sindri had so cunningly wrought and accompanied the mischief-maker, that the Heroes might judge who had won the wager so rashly offered by Loki. When they reached Asgard the Heroes seated themselves on their high seats agreeing among themselves that Odin, Thor and Frey should be judges in this case.

First, Loki offered to Odin the spear Gungner which was so wonderfully made that it never failed to hit the thing at which it was thrown, and it always sped back to the hand which had thrown it. Later, when Odin carried this spear in battle, if he shook it over his enemies they became so frightened that they all wanted to run away, but if he shook it over his friends they were so filled with courage that they could not be conquered. Then Thor received the hair, and when it was placed upon Sib's head it grew to her like living tresses, curling and waving in the wind. To Frey the ship was given, and though it was so small that it could be folded and carried in his pocket, when it was placed upon the waves it would grow large enough to hold an army of warriors with all their war gear; besides, as soon as the sails were hoisted, the wind would blow it whithersoever it was desired that the ship should go.

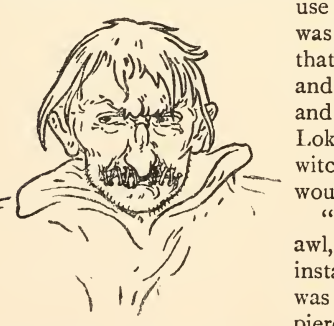
Brok then made his offerings, and to Odin he gave the ring Draupnir which had been made with such magic skill that every ninth night eight other rings dropped off it, though no one could see how they came; this the greatest of the Heroes ever wore upon his arm, until the death of his beautiful son Balder, when, as token of his great love he placed it upon the dead youth's breast as he lay on his funeral pyre. To Frey was given the golden boar, which would run faster than any horse, over the sea or through the air, and wherever it went, there it would be light, because the bristles shone so brightly. To Thor Brok gave the dull-looking hammer, saying, that whatever he struck with it would be destroyed; that no blow could be hard enough to hurt it; that if he threw it, it would

return to him so that he could never lose it; and that as he wished so would its size be—yet there was one fault about it, and that was that the handle was an inch too short.

It was with great joy that Thor took this treasure, knowing that in it he had something to help him in fighting the evil Rime-giants who were always trying to get the whole world for themselves until driven back by him.

Then the Heroes decided that of all the gifts the hammer was the best, and that, therefore, Loki had lost his wager and must lose his head. Loki offered to give all sorts of things to save himself, but the dwarf would not listen to any of them. "Catch me, then!" cried the mischievous one; but when Brok stretched his hand upon him Loki had gone, for he wore shoes which would carry him over the sea or through the air.

"Catch him!" cried the ugly little dwarf piteously to Thor, and in an instant Loki stood before them, trembling in Thor's strong grasp. Then the clever one argued that it was his head only which had been wagered, and that not one little tiny bit of his neck might be taken, or the dwarf would have more than his bargain. At this Brok cried impatiently that the head of a wicked person was of no use to him, all that he wanted was to stop Loki's tongue so that he could work less evil, and he took a knife and thread and tried to pierce holes in Loki's lips, but Loki bewitched the knife so that it would not cut.



"If only I had Sindri's awl," sighed the dwarf, and instantly his brother's awl was in his hand. Swiftly it pierced the lips of the mischief-maker, and swiftly Brok sewed them together and broke off the thread at the end of the sewing.

Then the Heroes gave presents for the dwarfs in return

for their wonderful things, and Brok returned to his cave. As for Loki, I think that it was not long before he loosed his lips and returned to his mischief-making.

When the Scandinavian dwarf ceased speaking there was murmuring all over the circle at the meannesses of Loki, and everyone felt glad that Thor had been so well served by the dwarfs and hoped that the mischief-maker, though he escaped that time after all, later met with the reward which he deserved. I think that if the Scandinavian dwarf had chosen to do so he might have told a very grim story of how it was that the wicked Loki came to his fate at last, but there were so many fairies, dwarfs, fays, gnomes, trolls, pucks, and other little people who were ready to tell stories that I don't think that they would have let the Scandinavian dwarf tell another story if he had wanted to. When he went back to his place in the great circle, the little fairy prince of a bright warm country sprang on to the stool in front of Oberon's throne and said that he would be glad to tell the story of his wife's life, and how it was that she came to marry him.

"And what is your wife's name?" said Oberon.

"Her name," answered the little prince, "is





Thumbeline

THERE was once a woman who had the greatest longing for a little tiny child, but she had no idea where to get one; so she went to an old witch and said to her, "I do so long to have a little child, will you tell me where I can get one?"

"Oh, we shall be able to manage that," said the witch. "Here is a barley corn for you; it is not at all the same kind as that which grows in the peasant's field, or with which chickens are fed; plant it in a flower-pot and you will see what will appear."

"Thank you, oh, thank you!" said the woman, and she gave the witch twelve pennies, then went home and planted the barley corn, and a large, handsome flower sprang up at once; it looked exactly like a tulip, but the petals were tightly shut up, just as if they were still in bud. "That is

a lovely flower," said the woman, and she kissed the pretty red and yellow petals; as she kissed it the flower burst open with a loud snap. It was a real tulip, you could see that; but right in the middle of the flower on the green stool sat a little tiny girl, most lovely and delicate; she was not more than an inch in height, so she was called Thumbeline.

Her cradle was a smartly varnished walnut shell, with the blue petals of violets for a mattress and a rose-leaf to cover her; she slept in it at night, but during the day she played about on the table where the woman had placed a plate, surrounded by a wreath of flowers on the outer edge with their stalks in water. A large tulip petal floated on the water, and on this little Thumbeline sat and sailed about from one side of the plate to the other; she had two white horse hairs for oars. It was a pretty sight. She could sing, too, with such delicacy and charm as was never heard before.

One night as she lay in her pretty bed, a great ugly toad hopped in at the window, for there was a broken pane. Ugh! how hideous that great wet toad was; it hopped right down on to the table where Thumbeline lay fast asleep, under the red rose-leaf.

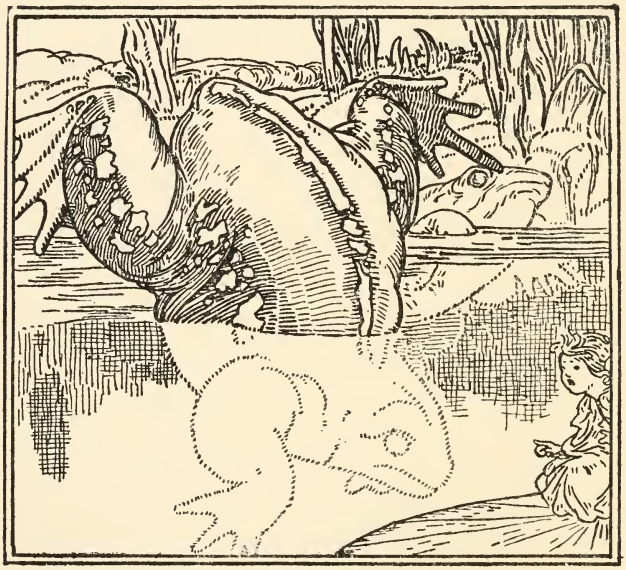
"Here is a lovely wife for my son," said the toad, and then she took up the walnut shell where Thumbeline slept and hopped away with it through the window, down into the garden. A great broad stream ran through it, but just at the edge it was swampy and muddy, and it was here that the toad lived with her son. Ugh! how ugly and hideous he was too, exactly like his mother. "Koax, koax, brekke-ke-kex," that was all he had to say when he saw the lovely little girl in the walnut shell.

"Do not talk so loud or you will wake her," said the old toad; "she might escape us yet, for she is as light as thistledown! We will put her on one of the broad water-lily leaves out in the stream; it will be just like an island to her, she is so small and light. She won't be able to run away from there while we get the state-room ready down under the mud, which you are to inhabit."

A great many water-lilies grew in the stream, their broad

green leaves looked as if they were floating on the surface of the water. The leaf which was furthest from the shore was also the biggest, and to this one the old toad swam out with the walnut shell in which little Thumbeline lay.

The poor, tiny, little creature woke up quite early in the



morning, and when she saw where she was she began to cry most bitterly, for there was water on every side of the big green leaf, and she could not reach the land at any point.

The old toad sat in the mud decking out her abode with grasses and the buds of the yellow water-lilies, so as to have it very nice for the new daughter-in-law, and then she swam out with her ugly son to the leaf where Thumbeline stood; they wanted to fetch her pretty bed to place it in the bridal chamber before they took her there. The old toad made a deep curtsey in the water before her, and

said, "Here is my son, who is to be your husband, and you are to live together most comfortably down in the mud."

"Koax, koax, brekke-ke-kex," that was all the son could say.

Then they took the pretty little bed and swam away with it, but Thumbeline sat quite alone on the green leaf and cried because she did not want to live with the ugly toad, or have her horrid son for a husband. The little fish which swam about in the water had no doubt seen the toad and heard what she said, so they stuck their heads up, wishing, I suppose, to see the little girl. As soon as they saw her, they were delighted with her, and were quite grieved to think that she was to go down to live with the ugly toad. No, that should never happen. They flocked together down in the water round about the green stem which held the leaf she stood upon, and gnawed at it with their teeth till it floated away down the stream carrying Thumbeline away where the toad could not follow her.

Thumbeline sailed past place after place, and the little birds in the bushes saw her and sang, "What a lovely little maid." The leaf with her on it floated further and further away and in this manner reached foreign lands.

A pretty little white butterfly fluttered round and round her for some time and at last settled on the leaf, for it had taken quite a fancy to Thumbeline; she was so happy now, because the toad could not reach her and she was sailing through such lovely scenes; the sun shone on the water and it looked like liquid gold. Then she took her sash and tied one end round the butterfly, and the other she made fast to the leaf which went gliding on quicker and quicker, and she with it for she was standing on the leaf.

At this moment a big cockchafer came flying along, he caught sight of her and in an instant he fixed his claw round her slender waist and flew off with her, up into a tree, but the green leaf floated down the stream and the butterfly with it, for he was tied to it and could not get loose.

Heavens! how frightened poor little Thumbeline was when the cockchafer carried her up into the tree, but she was most of all grieved about the pretty white butterfly which she had fastened to the leaf; if he could not succeed in getting loose he would be starved to death.

But the cockchafer cared nothing for that. He settled with her on the largest leaf on the tree, and fed her with honey from the flowers, and he said that she was lovely although she was not a bit like a chafer. Presently all the other chafers which lived in the tree came to visit them; they looked at Thumbeline and the young lady chafers twitched their feelers and said, "She has only got two legs, what a poor effect it has." "She has no feelers," said another. "She is so slender in the waist, fie, she looks like a human being." "How ugly she is," said all the mother chafers, and yet little Thumbeline was so pretty. That was certainly also the opinion of the cockchafer who had captured her, but when all the others said she was ugly, he at last began to believe it too, and would not have anything more to do with her, she might go wherever she liked! They flew down from the tree with her and placed her on a daisy, where she cried because she was so ugly that the chafers would have nothing to do with her; and after all, she was more beautiful than anything you could imagine, as delicate and transparent as the finest rose-leaf.

Poor little Thumbeline lived all the summer quite alone in the wood. She plaited a bed of grass for herself and hung it up under a big dock-leaf which sheltered her from the rain; she sucked the honey from the flowers for her food, and her drink was the dew which lay on the leaves in the morning. In this way the summer and autumn passed, but then came the winter. All the birds which used to sing so sweetly to her flew away, the great dock-leaf under which she had lived shrivelled up leaving nothing but a dead yellow stalk, and she shivered with the cold, for her clothes were worn out; she was such a tiny creature, poor little Thumbeline, she certainly must be

frozen to death. It began to snow and every snowflake which fell upon her was like a whole shovelful upon her, for she was so very, very small. Then she wrapped herself up in a withered leaf, but that did not warm her much, she trembled with the cold.



Close to the wood in which she had been living lay a large corn-field, but the corn had long ago been carried away and nothing remained but the bare, dry, stubble which stood up out of the frozen ground. The stubble was quite a forest for her to walk about in; oh, how she shook with the cold. Then she came to the door of a field-mouse's home. It was a little hole down under the stubble. The field-mouse lived so cosily and warm there, her whole room was full of corn, and she had a beautiful kitchen and larder besides. Poor Thumbeline stood just inside the door like any other poor beggar child and begged for a little piece of barley corn, for she had had nothing to eat for two whole days.

"You poor little thing," said the field-mouse, for she was at bottom a good old field-mouse. "Come into my warm room and dine with me." Then, as she took a fancy to Thumbeline, she said, "You may with pleasure stay with me for the winter, but you must keep my room clean and tidy and tell me stories, for I am very fond of them," and Thumbeline did what the good old field-mouse desired and was on the whole very comfortable.

"Now we shall soon have a visitor," said the field-mouse; "my neighbour generally comes to see me every week-day. He is even better housed than I am; his rooms are very large and he wears a most beautiful black velvet coat; if only you could get him for a husband you would indeed be well settled, but he can't see. You must tell him all the most beautiful stories you know."

But Thumbeline did not like this, and she would have nothing to say to the neighbour for he was a mole. He came and paid a visit in his black velvet coat. He was very rich and wise, said the field-mouse, and his home was twenty times as large as hers; and he had much learning but he did not like the sun or the beautiful flowers, in fact he spoke slightingly of them for he had never seen them. Thumbeline had to sing to him and she sang both "Fly away cockchafer" and "A monk, he wandered through the meadow," then the mole fell in love with her because of her sweet voice, but he did not say anything for he was of a discreet turn of mind.

He had just made a long tunnel through the ground from his house to theirs, and he gave the field-mouse and Thumbeline leave to walk in it whenever they liked. He told them not to be afraid of the dead bird which was lying in the passage. It was a whole bird with feathers and beak which had probably died quite recently at the beginning of the winter and was now entombed just where he had made his tunnel.

The mole took a piece of tinder-wood in his mouth, for that shines like fire in the dark, and walked in front of them to light them in the long dark passage; when they came to the place where the dead bird lay, the mole thrust his broad nose up to the roof and pushed the earth up so as to make a big hole through which the daylight shone. In the middle of the floor lay a dead swallow, with its pretty wings closely pressed to its sides, and the legs and head drawn in under the feathers; no doubt the poor bird had died of cold. Thumbeline was so sorry for it; she loved all the little birds, for they had twittered and sung

so sweetly to her during the whole summer; but the mole kicked it with his short legs and said, "Now it will pipe no more! It must be a miserable fate to be born a little bird! Thank heaven! no child of mine can be a bird; a bird like that has nothing but its twitter and dies of hunger in the winter."

"Yes, as a sensible man, you may well say that," said the field-mouse. "What *has* a bird for all its twittering when the cold weather comes? It has to hunger and freeze, but then it must cut a dash."

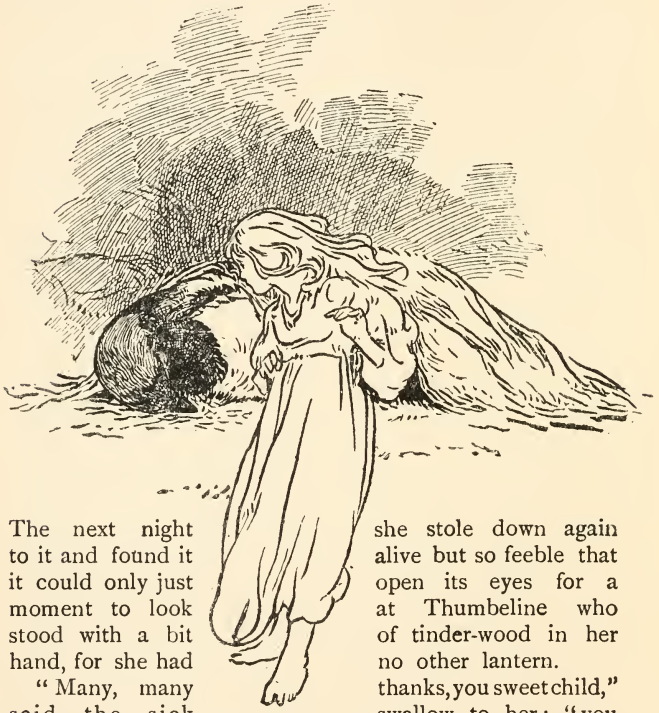
Thumbeline did not say anything, but when the others turned their backs to the bird, she stooped down and stroked aside the feathers which lay over its head, and kissed its closed eyes. "Perhaps it was this very bird which sang so sweetly to me in the summer," she thought; "what pleasure it gave me, the dear pretty bird."

The mole now closed up the hole which let in the daylight and conducted the ladies to their home. Thumbeline could not sleep at all in the night, so she got up out of her bed and plaited a large handsome mat of hay and then she carried it down and spread it all over the dead bird, and laid some soft cotton wool which she had found in the field-mouse's room close round its sides, so that it might have a warm bed on the cold ground.

"Good-bye, you sweet little bird," said she, "good-bye, and thank you for your sweet song through the summer when all the trees were green and the sun shone warmly upon us." Then she laid her head close up to the bird's breast, but was quite startled at a sound, as if something was thumping inside it. It was the bird's heart. It was not dead but lay in a swoon, and now that it had been warmed it began to revive.

In the autumn all the swallows fly away to warm countries, but if one happens to be belated, it feels the cold so much that it falls down like a dead thing, and remains lying where it falls till the snow covers it up. Thumbeline quite shook with fright for the bird was very, very big beside her, but she gathered up

her courage, packed the wool closer round the poor bird, and fetched a leaf of mint which she had herself for a coverlet and laid it over the bird's head.



The next night she stole down again to it and found it alive but so feeble that it could only just open its eyes for a moment to look at Thumbeline who stood with a bit of tinder-wood in her hand, for she had no other lantern.

"Many, many thanks, you sweet child," said the sick swallow to her; "you have warmed me beautifully. I shall soon have strength to fly out into the warm sun again."

"Oh!" said she, "it is so cold outside, it snows and freezes, stay in your warm bed, I will tend you." Then she brought water to the swallow in a leaf, and when it had drunk some, it told her how it had torn its wing on a blackthorn bush, and therefore could not fly as fast as

the other swallows which were taking flight then for the distant warm lands. At last it fell down on the ground, but after that it remembered nothing and did not in the least know how it had got into the tunnel.

It stayed there all the winter, and Thumbeline was good to it and grew very fond of it. She did not tell either the mole or the field-mouse anything about it, for they did not like the poor unfortunate swallow.

As soon as the spring came and the warmth of the sun penetrated the ground, the swallow said good-bye to Thumbeline, who opened the hole which the mole had made above. The sun streamed in deliciously upon them, and the swallow asked if she would not go with him, she could sit upon his back and they would fly far away into the green wood. But Thumbeline knew that it would grieve the old field-mouse if she left her like that.

"No, I can't," said Thumbeline.

"Good-bye, good-bye, then, you kind pretty girl," said the swallow, and flew out into the sunshine. Thumbeline looked after him and her eyes filled with tears, for she was very fond of the poor swallow.

"Tweet, tweet," sang the bird, and flew into the green wood.

Thumbeline was very sad. She was not allowed to go out into the warm sunshine at all; the corn which was sown in the field near the field-mouse's house grew quite long, it was a thick forest for the poor little girl who was so very, very small.

"You must work at your trousseau this summer," said the mouse to her, for their neighbour the tiresome mole in his black velvet coat had asked her to marry him. "You shall have both woollen and linen, you shall have wherewith to clothe and cover yourself when you become the mole's wife." Thumbeline had to turn the distaff and the field-mouse hired four spiders to spin and weave day and night. The mole paid a visit every evening and he was always saying that when the summer came to an end, the sun would not shine nearly so warmly; now it burnt the

ground as hard as a stone. Yes, when the summer was over he would celebrate his marriage; but Thumbeline was not at all pleased, for she did not care a bit for the tiresome mole. Every morning at sunrise and every evening at sunset she used to steal out to the door, and when the



wind blew aside the tops of the cornstalks so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how bright and lovely it was out there, and wished so much to see the dear swallow again; but it never came back; no doubt it was a long way off, flying about in the beautiful green woods.

When the autumn came all Thumbeline's outfit was ready.

"In four weeks you must be married," said the field-mouse to her. But Thumbeline cried and said that she would not have the tiresome mole for a husband.

"Fiddle-dee-dee," said the field-mouse; "don't be ob-

stinate or I shall bite you with my white tooth. You are going to have a splendid husband; the queen herself hasn't the equal of his black velvet coat; both his kitchen and his cellar are full. You should thank heaven for such a husband!"

So they were to be married; the mole had come to fetch Thumbeline; she was to live deep down under the ground with him, and never to go out into the warm sunshine, for he could not bear it. The poor child was very sad at the thought of bidding good-bye to the beautiful sun; while she had been with the field-mouse she had at least been allowed to look at it from the door.

"Good-bye, you bright sun," she said as she stretched out her arms towards it and went a little way outside the field-mouse's house, for now the harvest was over and only the stubble remained. "Good-bye, good-bye!" she said, and threw her tiny arms round a little red flower growing there. "Give my love to the dear swallow if you happen to see him."

"Tweet, tweet," she heard at this moment above her head. She looked up; it was the swallow just passing. As soon as it saw Thumbeline it was delighted; she told it how unwilling she was to have the ugly mole for a husband, and that she was to live deep down underground where the sun never shone. She could not help crying about it.

"The cold winter is coming," said the swallow, and I am going to fly away to warm countries. Will you go with me? You can sit upon my back! Tie yourself on with your sash, then we will fly away from the ugly mole and his dark cavern, far away over the mountains to those warm countries where the sun shines with greater splendour than here, where it is always summer and there are heaps of flowers. Do fly with me, you sweet little Thumbeline, who saved my life when I lay frozen in the dark earthy passage."

"Yes, I will go with you," said Thumbeline, seating herself on the bird's back with her feet on its outspread

wings. She tied her band tightly to one of the strongest feathers, and then the swallow flew away, high up in the air above forests and lakes, high up above the biggest mountains where the snow never melts; and Thumbeline shivered in the cold air, but then she crept under the bird's warm feathers, and only stuck out her little head to look at the beautiful sights beneath her.

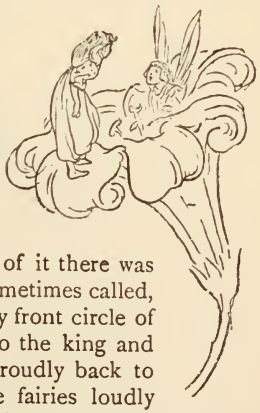
Then at last they reached the warm countries. The sun shone with a warmer glow than here; the sky was twice as high, and the most beautiful green and blue grapes grew in clusters on the banks and hedgerows. Oranges and lemons hung in the woods which were fragrant with myrtles and sweet herbs, and beautiful children ran about the roads playing with the large, gorgeously-coloured butterflies. But the swallow flew on and on, and the country grew more and more beautiful. Under magnificent green trees on the shores of the blue sea stood a dazzling white marble palace of ancient date; vines wreathed themselves round the stately pillars. At the head of these there were countless nests, and the swallow who carried Thumbeline lived in one of them.

"Here is my house," said the swallow; "but if you will choose one of the gorgeous flowers growing down there I will place you in it, and you will live as happily as you can wish."

"That would be delightful," she said, and clapped her little hands.

A great white marble column had fallen to the ground and lay there broken in three pieces, but between these the most lovely white flowers grew. The swallow flew down with Thumbeline and put her upon one of the broad leaves; what was her astonishment to find a little man in the middle of the flower, as bright and transparent as if he had been made of glass. He had a lovely golden crown upon his head and the most beautiful bright wings upon his shoulders; he was no bigger than Thumbeline. He was the fairy of the flowers. There was a similar little man or woman in every flower, but he was the king of them all.

"How very beautiful he is," whispered Thumbeline to the swallow. The little prince was quite frightened by the swallow, for it was a perfect giant of a bird to him, he who was so small and delicate, but when he saw Thumbeline he was delighted; she was the very prettiest girl he had ever seen. He therefore took the golden crown off his own head and placed it on hers, and asked her name, and if she would be his wife, and then she would be queen of the flowers! Yes, he was certainly a very different kind of husband from the toad's son, or the mole with his black velvet coat. So she accepted the beautiful prince, and out of every flower stepped a little lady or a gentleman so lovely that it was a pleasure to look at them. Each one brought a gift to Thumbeline, but the best of all was a pair of pretty wings from a large white butterfly; they were fastened on to her back, and then she too could fly from flower to flower. All was then delight and happiness, but the swallow sat alone in his nest and sang to them as well as he could, for his heart was heavy, he was so fond of Thumbeline himself and would have wished never to part from her.



"You shall not be called Thumbeline," said the flower-fairy to her; "that is such an ugly name, and you are so pretty. We will call you Maia."

Of course the Fairy Prince's story was quite true, and as proof of it there was Thumbeline, or Maia, as she was sometimes called, sitting not very far away in the very front circle of fairies, and having made his bow to the king and queen, the little prince stepped proudly back to his seat by her side, and all the fairies loudly cheered the pretty couple. When the cheering had stopped it was seen that there were several of the company trying to get on the tale-tellers' stool at once, all anxious to win such

cheering. King Oberon's trumpeter, standing on the steps of the throne, blew loudly and the squabble stopped at once, each of the competitors turning round and expecting to be told that he was the favoured one, but Oberon was too wise for that and bade them all go back to their places and not to come forward again until called upon to do so, and he then turned to Titania and said:

"Our queen shall select the next tale-teller. Who, my Titania, shall it be?"

And the queen pointed out a little fairy dressed all in green with a tiny golden harp in her hand and with a wreath of shamrock round her head, saying:

"Let an Irish fairy tell us something of the doings in her green land."

The little one in green at once came forward and said that the story she had to tell would not be a pretty one such as that about Thumbeline, but it would be about one of those mischievous changelings who got the fairies such a bad name among some people, and her story would be called





The Young Piper

THERE lived on the borders of the county of Tipperary a decently honest couple whose names were Mick Flanigan and Judy Muldoon. These poor people were blessed, as the saying is, with four children, all boys: three of them were as fine, stout, healthy, good-looking children as ever the sun shone upon; and it was enough to make any Irishman proud of his countrymen to see them about one o'clock on a fine summer day standing at their father's cabin door, with their beautiful flaxen hair hanging in curls about their heads, and their cheeks like two rosy apples, and a big laughing potato smoking in their hands. A proud man was Mick of these fine children, and a proud woman, too, was

Judy; and reason enough they had to be so. But it was far otherwise with the remaining one, which was the third eldest: he was the most miserable, ugly, ill-conditioned brat you ever saw: he was so ill-thriven that he never was able to stand alone, or to leave the cradle; he had long, shaggy, matted, curled hair, as black as the soot; his face was of a greenish-yellow colour; his eyes were like two burning coals, and were for ever moving in his head, as if they had had the perpetual motion. Before he was a twelvemonth old he had a mouthful of great teeth; his hands were like kite's claws, and his legs were no thicker than the handle of a whip, and about as straight as a reaping hook: to make the matter worse, he had the appetite of a cormorant, and the whinge, and the yelp, and the screech, and the yowl was never out of his mouth.

The neighbours all suspected that he was something not right, particularly as it was observed, when people, as they do in the country, got about the fire and began to talk of religion and good things, the brat, as he lay in the cradle, which his mother generally put near the fireplace that he might be snug, used to sit up, as they were in the middle of their talk, and begin to bellow as if the devil was in him in right earnest: this, as I said, led the neighbours to think that all was not right, and there was a general consultation held one day about what would be best to do with him. Some advised one thing, and some another; at last one spoke of sending for the priest, who was a very holy and a very learned man, to see it. To this Judy of course had no objection, but one thing or another always prevented her doing so, and the upshot of the business was that the priest never saw him.

Things went on in the old way for some time longer. The brat continued yelping and yowling, and eating more than his three brothers put together, and playing all sorts of unlucky tricks, for he was mighty mischievously inclined; till it happened one day that Tim Carrol, the blind piper, going his rounds, called in and sat down by

the fire to have a bit of chat with the woman of the house. So after some time, Tim, who was no churl of his music, yoked on the pipes, and began to bellows away in high style; when the instant he began, the young fellow, who had been lying as still as a mouse in his cradle, sat up, began to grin and twist his ugly face, to swing about his long tawny arms, and to kick out his crooked legs, and to show signs of great glee at the music. At last nothing would serve him but he should get the pipes into his own hands, and to humour him his mother asked Tim to lend them to the child for a minute. Tim, who was kind to children, readily consented; and as Tim had not his sight, Judy herself brought them to the cradle, and went to put them on him; but she had no occasion, for the youth seemed quite up to the business. He buckled on the pipes, set the bellows under one arm, and the bag under the other, worked them both as knowingly as if he had been twenty years at the business, and lilted up "Sheela na guira" in the finest style imaginable.

All were in astonishment: the poor woman crossed herself. Tim, who, as I said before, was dark, and did not well know who was playing, was in great delight; and when he heard that it was a little prechan not five years old, that had never seen a set of pipes in his life, he wished the mother joy of her son; offered to take him off her hands if she would part with him, swore he was born a piper, a natural *genus*, and declared that in a little time more, with the help of a little good instruction from himself, there would not be his match in the whole county. The poor woman was greatly delighted to hear all this, particularly as what Tim said about natural genus quieted some misgivings that were rising in her mind, lest what the neighbours said about his not being right might be too true; and it gratified her moreover to think that her dear child (for she really loved the whelp) would not be forced to turn out and beg, but might earn decent bread for himself. So when Mick came home in the evening from his work, she up and told him all that had happened, and all that Tim Carrol had

said; and Mick, as was natural, was very glad to hear it, for the helpless condition of the poor creature was a great trouble to him. So next day he took the pig to the fair, and with what it brought set off to Clonmel, and bespoke a bran-new set of pipes of the proper size for him.

In about a fortnight the pipes came home, and the moment the chap in his cradle laid eyes on them, he squealed with delight and threw up his legs, and bumped himself in his cradle, and went on with a great many comical tricks; till at last, to quiet him, they gave him the pipes, and he immediately set to and pulled away at "Jig Polthog," to the admiration of all that heard him.

The fame of his skill on the pipes soon spread far and near, for there was not a piper in the next six counties could come at all near him in "Old Moderagh rue," or "The Hare in the Corn," or "The Fox-Hunter's Jig," or "The Rakes of Cashel," or "The Piper's Maggot," or any of the fine Irish jigs which make people dance whether they will or no: and it was surprising to hear him rattle away "The Fox Hunt"; you'd really think you heard the hounds giving tongue and the terriers yelping always behind, and the huntsman and the whippers-in cheering or correcting the dogs; it was, in short, the very next thing to seeing the hunt itself.

The best of him was he was noways stingy of his music, and many a merry dance the boys and girls of the neighbourhood used to have in his father's cabin; and he would play up music for them, that they said used as it were to put quicksilver in their feet; and they all declared they never moved so light and so airy to any piper's playing that ever they danced to.

But besides all his fine Irish music, he had one queer tune of his own, the oddest that ever was heard; for the moment he began to play it everything in the house seemed disposed to dance; the plates and porringers used to jingle on the dresser, the pots and pot-hooks used to rattle in the

chimney, and people used even to fancy they felt the stools moving from under them; but, however it might be with the stools, it is certain that no one could keep long sitting on them, for both old and young always fell to capering as hard as ever they could. The girls complained that when he began this tune it always threw them out in their dancing, and that they never could handle their feet rightly, for they felt the floor like ice under them, and themselves every moment ready to come sprawling on their backs or their faces. The young bachelors that wished to show off their dancing and their new pumps, and their bright red or green and yellow garters, swore that it confused them so that they never could go rightly through the *heel and toe*, or *cover the buckle*, or any of their best steps, but felt themselves always all bedizzied and bewildered, and then old and young would go jostling and knocking together in a frightful manner; and when the unlucky brat had them all in this way, whirligigging about the floor, he'd grin and chuckle and chatter, for all the world like Jacko the monkey when he has played off some of his roguery.

The older he grew the worse he grew, and by the time he was six years old there was no standing the house for him; he was always making his brothers burn or scald themselves, or break their shins over the pots and stools. One time, in harvest, he was left at home by himself, and when his mother came in she found the cat a-horseback on the dog, with her face to the tail, and her legs tied round him, and the urchin playing his queer tune to them; so that the dog went barking and jumping about, and puss was mewing for the dear life, and slapping her tail backwards and forwards, which, as it would hit against the dog's chaps, he'd snap it and bite, and then there was the phillilloo. Another time, the farmer with whom Mick worked, a very decent, respectable man, happened to call in, and Judy wiped a stool with her apron, and invited him to sit down and rest himself after his walk. He was sitting with his back to the cradle, and behind

him was a pan of blood, for Judy was making pig's puddings. The lad lay quite still in his nest, and watched his opportunity till he got ready a hook at the end of a piece of twine, which he contrived to fling so handily that it caught in the bob of the man's nice new wig, and soused it in the pan of blood. Another time his mother was coming in from milking the cow, with the pail on her head: the minute he saw her he lilted up his infernal tune and the poor woman, letting go the pail, clapped her hands aside and began to dance a jig, and tumbled the milk all atop of her husband, who was bringing in some turf to boil the supper. In short there would be no end to telling all his pranks, and all the mischievous tricks he played.

Soon after, some mischances began to happen to the farmer's cattle. A horse took the staggers, a fine veal calf died, and some of his sheep; the cows began to grow vicious, and to kick down the milk pails, and the roof of one end of the barn fell in; and the farmer took it into his head that Mick Flanigan's unlucky child was the cause of all the mischief. So one day he called Mick aside and said to him: "Mick, you see things are not going on with me as they ought, and to be plain with you, Mick, I think that child of yours is the cause of it. I am really falling away to nothing with fretting, and I can hardly sleep on my bed at night for thinking of what may happen before the morning. So I'd be glad if you'd look out for work somewhere else; you're as good a man as any in the country, and there's no fear but you'll have your choice of work."

To this Mick replied, that he was sorry for his losses, and still sorrier that he and his should be thought to be the cause of them; that for his own part he was not quite easy in his mind about that child, but he had him and so must keep him. And he promised to look out for another place at once.

So Mick gave out that he was about to leave his work at John Riordan's, and immediately a farmer who lived a

couple of miles off, and who wanted a ploughman (the last one having just left him), came up to Mick, and offered him a house and garden, and work all the year round. Mick, who knew him to be a good employer, immediately closed with him; so it was agreed the farmer should send a car to take his little bit of furniture, and that he should remove on the following Thursday.

When Thursday came, the car came according to promise, and Mick loaded it, and put the cradle with the child and his pipes on the top, and Judy sat beside it to take care of him, lest he should tumble out. They drove the cow before them, the dog followed, but the cat was of course left behind; and the other three children went along the road picking skee-hories (haws) and blackberries, for it was a fine day towards the latter end of harvest.

They had to cross a river, but as it ran through a bottom between two high banks, you did not see it till you were close on it. The young fellow was lying pretty quiet in the bottom of the cradle, till they came to the head of the bridge, when hearing the roaring of the water (for there was a great flood in the river, as it had rained heavily for the last two or three days), he sat up in his cradle and looked about him; and the instant he got a sight of the water and found they were going to take him across it, oh! how he did bellow and how he did squeal! —no rat caught in a snap-trap ever sang out equal to him.

"Whisht! a lanna," said Judy, "there's no fear of you; sure it's only over the stone bridge we're going."

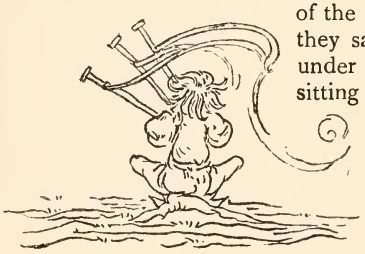
"Bad luck to you, you old rip!" cried he, "what a pretty trick you've played me, to bring me here!" And still he went on yelling, and the further they got on the bridge the louder he yelled, till at last Mick could hold out no longer, so giving him a skelp with the whip he had in his hand, "You brat!" he said, "will you never stop bawling? A body can't hear their ears for you."

The moment he felt the thong of the whip, he leaped

up in the cradle, clapped the pipes under his arm, gave a most wicked grin at Mick, and jumped clean off the cart over the side of the bridge down into the water.

"O my child, my child!" shouted Judy, "he's gone for ever from me."

Mick and the rest of the children ran to the other side of the bridge, and looking over, they saw him coming out from under the arch of the bridge, sitting cross-legged on the top of a white-headed wave, and playing away on the pipes as merrily at if nothing had happened. The river was running very rapidly, so he was whirled away at a great rate; but he played as fast, ay and faster, than the river ran; and though they set off as hard as they could along the bank, yet, as the river made a sudden turn round the hill, about a hundred yards below the bridge, by the time they got there he was out of sight, and no one ever laid eyes on him more; but the general opinion was that he went home with the pipes to his own relations, the good people, to make music for them.



"They must have been well-rid of such an uncomfortable child," said King Oberon, though it was noticed that he and most of the fairies were laughing to think of the astonishment which must have been shown by Mick and Judy when the young piper went plump over into the river off the cart-load of furniture.

They were still laughing when a voice exclaimed,

"Mine is a short story with a long name."

At once the laughter stopped and all turned to the stool on which a quaint Gnome was sitting with one leg over the knee of the other and with his hands clasping his foot was rocking backwards and forwards until he saw that



everybody's attention was directed to him, when he went on to say :

"Sometimes when fairy-folk who are not so good as they might be, try to do harm to people by pretending to do them good, they are not so successful, as you will learn from my tale of





Rumpel-Stilts-Ken

By the side of a wood, in a country a long way off, ran a fine stream of water; and upon the stream there stood a mill. The miller's house was close by, and the miller, you must know, had a very beautiful daughter. She was, moreover, very shrewd and clever; and the miller was so proud of her, that he one day told the king of the land, who used to come and hunt in the wood, that his daughter could spin gold out of straw. Now this king was very fond of money; and when he heard the miller's boast his greediness was raised, and he sent for the girl to be brought before him. Then he led her to a chamber in his palace where there was a great heap of straw, and gave her a spinning-wheel, and said, "All this must be spun into gold before morning, as you love your life." It was in vain that the poor maiden said that it was only a silly boast of her father, for that she could do no such thing as spin straw into gold: the chamber door was locked, and she was left alone.

She sat down in one corner of the room, and began to bewail her hard fate; when on a sudden the door opened, and a droll-looking little man hobbled in, and said, "Good morrow to you, my good lass; what are you weeping for?" "Alas!" said she, "I must spin

this straw into gold, and I know not how." "What will you give me," said the hobgoblin, "to do it for you?" "My necklace," replied the maiden. He took her at her word, and sat himself down to the wheel, and whistled and sang—

"Round about, round about,
Lo and behold!
Reel away, reel away,
Straw into gold!"

And round about the wheel went merrily; the work was quickly done, and the straw was all spun into gold.

When the king came in and saw this, he was greatly astonished and pleased; but his heart grew still more greedy of gain, and he shut up the poor miller's daughter again with a fresh task. Then she knew not what to do, and sat down once more to weep; but the dwarf soon opened the door, and said, "What will you give me to do your task?" "The ring on my finger," said she. So her little friend took the ring, and began to work at the wheel again, and whistled and sang—

"Round about, round about,
Lo and behold!
Reel away, reel away,
Straw into gold!"

till, long before morning, all was done again.

The king was greatly delighted to see all this glittering treasure; but still he had not enough: so he took the miller's daughter to a yet larger heap, and said, "All this must be spun to-night; and if it is, you shall be my queen." As soon as she was alone the dwarf came in, and said, "What will you give me to spin gold for you this third time?" "I have nothing left," said she. "Then say you will give me," said the little man, "the first little child that you may have when you are queen." "That may never be," thought the

miller's daughter: and as she knew no other way to get her task done, she said she would do what he asked. Round went the wheel again to the old song, and the manikin once more spun the heap into gold. The king came in the morning, and, finding all he wanted, was forced to keep his word; so he married the miller's daughter, and she really became queen.

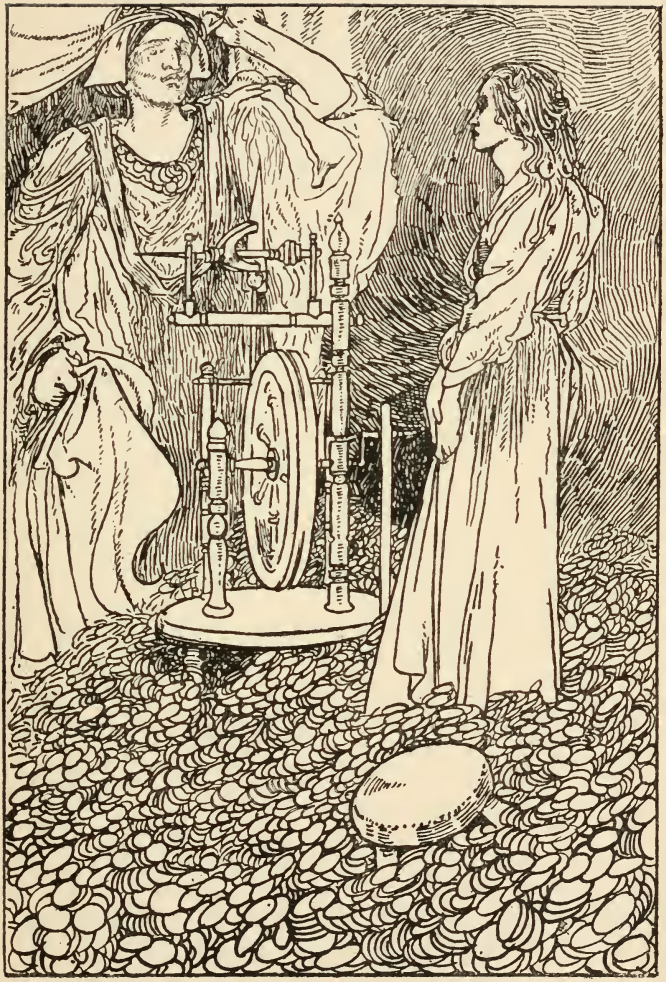
At the birth of her first little child she was very glad, and forgot the dwarf, and what she had said. But one day he came into her room, where she was sitting playing with her baby, and put her in mind of it. Then she grieved sorely at her misfortune, and said she would give him all the wealth of the kingdom if he would let her off, but in vain; till at last her tears softened him, and he said, "I will give you three days' grace, and, if during that time you tell me my name, you shall keep your child."

Now the queen lay awake all night, thinking of all the odd names that she had ever heard; and she sent messengers all over the land to find out new ones. The next day the little man came, and she began with TIMOTHY, ICHABOD, BENJAMIN, JEREMIAH, and all the names she could remember; but to all and each of them he said, "Madam, that is not my name."

The second day she began with all the comical names she could hear of, BANDY-LEGS, HUNCH-BACK, CROOK-SHANKS, and so on; but the little gentleman still said to every one of them, "Madam, that is not my name."

The third day one of the messengers came back and said, "I travelled two days without hearing of any other names; but yesterday, as I was climbing a high hill, among the trees of the forest where the fox and the hare bid each other good-night, I saw a little hut; and before the hut burnt a fire; and round about the fire a funny little dwarf was dancing upon one leg, and singing—

"'Merrily the feast I'll make,
To-day I'll brew, to-morrow bake;



Merrily I'll dance and sing,
For next day will a stranger bring.
Little does my lady dream
Rumpel-stilts-ken is my name!'"

When the queen heard this she jumped for joy, and as soon as her little friend came she sat down upon her throne, and called all her court round to enjoy the fun; and the nurse stood by her side with the baby in her arms, as if it was quite ready to be given up. Then the little man began to chuckle at the thoughts of having the poor child to take home with him to his hut in the woods; and he cried out, "Now, lady, what is my name?" "Is it JOHN?" asked she.



"No, madam!" "Is it TOM?" "No, madam!" "Is it JEMMY?" "It is not?" "Can your name be RUMPEL-STILTS-KEN?" said the lady slily. "Some witch told you that!—some witch told you that!" cried the little man, and dashed his right foot in a rage so deep into the floor, that he was forced to lay hold of it with both hands to pull it out.

Then he made the best of his way off, while the nurse laughed and the baby crowed; and all the court jeered at him for having had so much trouble for nothing, and said, "We wish you a very good morning, and a merry feast, Mr RUMPEL-STILTS-KEN!"

"Too short, too short," said King Oberon.

"Your Majesty," protested the Gnome in a dignified manner, "a story should not be measured by the number of words which it contains, nor should twenty minutes be spent over a tale which can be told in ten.

"True," replied Oberon good-humouredly, "but as you

can tell us so much in so little time perhaps you can tell us another."

"With pleasure," said the flattered Gnome, and at once, merely pausing while he reversed the position of his legs so that he nursed the left one instead of the right, he began the story of





Karl Katz

In the midst of the Hartz forests there is a high mountain, of which the neighbours tell all sorts of stories: how the goblins and fairies dance on it by night; and how the old Emperor Red-beard holds his court there, and sits on his marble throne, with his long beard sweeping on the ground.

A great many years ago there lived in a village at the foot of this mountain, one Karl Katz. Now Karl was a goatherd, and every morning he drove his flock to feed upon the green spots that are here and there found on the mountain's side. In the evening he sometimes thought it too late to drive his charge home; so he used in such cases to shut it up in a spot amongst the woods, where the old ruined walls of some castle that had long ago been deserted were left standing, and were high enough to form

a fold, in which he could count his goats, and let them rest for the night. One evening he found that the prettiest goat of his flock had vanished, soon after they were driven into this fold. He searched everywhere for it in vain; but, to his surprise and delight, when he counted his flock in the morning, what should he see, the first of the flock, but his lost goat! Again and again the same strange thing happened. At last he thought he would watch still more narrowly; and, having looked carefully over the old walls, he found a narrow doorway, through which it seemed that his favourite made her way. Karl followed, and found a path leading downwards through a cleft in the rocks. On he went, scrambling as well as he could, down the side of the rock, and at last came to the mouth of a cave, where he lost sight of his goat. Just then he saw that his faithful dog was not with him. He whistled, but no dog was there; and he was therefore forced to go into the cave and try to find his goat by himself.

He groped his way for a while, and at last came to a place where a little light found its way in; and there he wondered not a little to find his goat, employing itself very much at its ease in the cavern, in eating corn, which kept dropping from some place over its head. He went up and looked about him, to see where all this corn, that rattled about his ears like a hail-storm, could come from: but all overhead was dark, and he could find no clue to this strange business.

At last, as he stood listening, he thought he heard the neighing and stamping of horses. He listened again; it was plainly so; and after a while he was sure that horses were feeding above him, and that the corn fell from their mangers. What could these horses be which were thus kept in the clefts of rocks, where none but the goat's foot ever trod? There must be people of some sort or other living here; and who could they be? and was it safe to trust himself in such company? Karl pondered awhile; but his wonder only grew greater and greater, when on a

sudden he heard his own name, "Karl Katz!" echo through the cavern. He turned round, but could see nothing. "Karl Katz!" again sounded sharply in his ears; and soon out came a little dwarfish page, with a high-peaked hat and a scarlet cloak, from a dark corner at one end of the cave.

The dwarf nodded, and beckoned him to follow. Karl thought he should first like to know a little about who it was that thus sought his company. He asked: but the dwarf shook his head, answering not a word, and again beckoned him to follow. He did so; and winding his way through ruins, he soon heard rolling overhead what sounded like peals of thunder, echoing among the rocks: the noise grew louder and louder as he went on, and at last he came to a courtyard surrounded by old ivy-grown walls. The spot seemed to be the bosom of a little valley; above rose on every hand high masses of rock; wide-branching trees threw their arms overhead, so that nothing but a glimmering twilight made its way through; and here, on the cool smooth-shaven turf, Karl saw twelve strange old figures amusing themselves very sedately with a game of nine-pins.

Their dress did not seem altogether strange to Karl, for in the church of the town whither he went every week to market there was an old monument, with figures of queer old knights upon it, dressed in the very same fashion. Not a word fell from any of their lips. They moved about soberly and gravely, each taking his turn at the game; but the oldest of them ordered Karl Katz, by dumb signs, to busy himself in setting up the pins as they knocked them down. At first his knees trembled, as he hardly dared snatch a stolen sidelong glance at the long beards and old-fashioned dresses of the worthy knights; but he soon saw that as each knight played out his game he went to his seat, and there took a hearty draught at a flagon, which the dwarf kept filled, and which sent up the smell of the richest old wine.

Little by little Karl got bolder; and at last he plucked

up his heart so far as to beg the dwarf, by signs, to let him too take his turn at the flagon. The dwarf gave it him with a grave bow, and Karl thought he never tasted anything half so good before. This gave him new strength for his work; and as often as he flagged at all he turned to the same kind friend for help in his need.

Which was tired first, he or the knights, Karl never could tell; or whether the wine got the better of his head: but what he knew was, that sleep at last overpowered him, and that when he awoke he found himself stretched out upon the old spot within the walls where he had folded his flock, and saw that the bright sun was high up in the heavens. The same green turf was spread beneath, and the same tottering ivy-clad walls surrounded him. He rubbed his eyes and called his dog; but neither dog nor goat was to be seen; and when he looked about him again, the grass seemed to be longer under his feet than it was yesterday; and trees hung over his head which he had either never seen before, or had quite forgotten. Shaking his head, and hardly knowing whether he was in his right mind, he got up and stretched himself: somehow or other his joints felt stiffer than they were. "It serves me right," said he; "this comes of sleeping out of one's own bed." Little by little he recollected his evening's sport, and licked his lips as he thought of the charming wine he had taken so much of. "But who," thought he, "can those people be, that come to this odd place to play at nine-pins?"

His first step was to look for the doorway through which he had followed his goat; but to his astonishment, not the least trace of an opening of any sort was to be seen. There stood the wall, without chink or crack big enough for a rat to pass through. Again he paused and scratched his head. His hat was full of holes: "Why, it was new last Shrove-tide!" said he. By chance his eye fell next on his shoes, which were almost new when he last left home; but now they looked so old, that they were likely to fall to pieces before he could



"TWELVE STRANGE OLD FIGURES AMUSING THEMSELVES VERY SEDATELY WITH A GAME OF NINE PINS." MARINOT.

get home. All his clothes seemed in the same sad plight. The more he looked, the more he pondered, the more he was at a loss to know what could have happened to him.

At length he turned round, and left the old walls to look for his flock. Slow and out of heart he wound his way among the mountain steeps, through paths where his flocks were wont to wander: still not a goat was to be seen. Again he whistled and called his dog, but no dog came. Below him in the plain lay the village where his home was; so at length he took the downward path, and set out with a heavy heart and a faltering step in search of his flock.

"Surely," said he, "I shall soon meet some neighbour, who can tell me where my goats are?" But the people who met him, as he drew near to the village, were all unknown to him. They were not even dressed as his neighbours were, and they seemed as if they hardly spoke the same tongue. When he eagerly asked each, as he came up, after his goats, they only stared at him and stroked their chins. At last he did the same too; and what was his wonder to find that his beard was grown at least a foot long! "The world," said he to himself, "is surely turned upside down, or if not, I must be bewitched": and yet he knew the mountain, as he turned round again, and looked back on its woody heights; and he knew the houses and cottages also, with their little gardens, as he entered the village. All were in the places he had always known them in; and he heard some children, too (as a traveller that passed by was asking his way), call the village by the very same name he had always known it to bear.

Again he shook his head, and went straight through the village to his own cottage. Alas! it looked sadly out of repair; the windows were broken, the door off its hinges, and in the courtyard lay an unknown child, in a ragged dress, playing with a rough, toothless old dog, whom he thought he ought to know, but who snarled

and barked in his face when he called to him. He went in at the open doorway; but he found all so dreary and empty, that he staggered out again like a drunken man, and called his wife and children loudly by their names: but no one heard, at least no one answered him.

A crowd of women and children soon flocked around the strange-looking man with the long grey beard; and all broke upon him at once with the questions, "Who are you?" "Who is it that you want?" It seemed to him so odd to ask other people, at his own door, after his wife and children, that, in order to get rid of the crowd, he named the first man that came into his head. "Hans the blacksmith?" said he. Most held their tongues and stared; but at last an old woman said, "He went these seven years ago to a place that you will not reach to-day." "Fritz the tailor, then?" "Heaven rest his soul!" said an old beldam upon crutches; "he has lain these ten years in a house that he'll never leave."

Karl Katz looked at the old woman again, and shuddered, as he knew her to be one of his old gossips; but saw she had a strangely altered face. All wish to ask further questions was gone; but at last a young woman made her way through the gaping throng, with a baby in her arms, and a little girl of about three years old clinging to her other hand. All three looked the very image of his own wife. "What is thy name?" asked he, wildly. "Liese!" said she. "And your father's?" "Karl Katz! Heaven bless him!" said she: "but, poor man! he is lost and gone. It is now full twenty years since we sought for him day and night on the mountain. His dog and his flock came back, but he never was heard of any more. I was then seven years old."

Poor Karl could hold no longer: "I am Karl Katz, and no other!" said he, as he took the child from his daughter's arms and kissed it over and over again.

All stood gaping, and hardly knowing what to say or

think, when old Stropken the schoolmaster hobbled by, and took a long and close look at him. "Karl Katz! Karl Katz!" said he slowly: "why, it *is* Karl Katz, sure enough! There is my own mark upon him; there is the scar over his right eye, that I gave him myself one day with my oak stick." Then several others also cried out, "Yes it is! it is Karl Katz! Welcome, neighbour, welcome home!" "But where," said or thought all, "can an honest steady fellow like you have been these twenty years?"



And now the whole village had flocked around; the children laughed, the dogs barked, and all were glad to see neighbour Karl home alive and well. As to where he had been for the twenty years, that was a part of the story at which Karl shrugged up his shoulders; for he never could very well explain it, and seemed to think the less that was said about it the better. But it was plain enough that what dwelt most on his memory was the noble wine that had tickled his mouth while the knights played their game of nine-pins.

No sooner had the Gnome concluded his story than a funny looking fairy with feathers in his hair and hanging in a stream all down his back—just like a Red Indian in all his war-paint—exclaimed,

"Karl Katz, indeed, the people where I come from call him Rip Van Winkle and he really—"

"Stop, my little friend," said the king, "when we want your very entertaining story we will ask you for it, no doubt there are more folk than Karl Katz and your friend Rip Van Winkle who have lived long with the fairies and gone back after years to their own people."

"History repeats itself," said the Gnome sententiously.

"Yes," added Oberon, "and you have repeated enough, so now we will have a story from someone else."

The fairies all laughed at the king's little sally, and settled themselves down to hear the next tale, which was given by the Fairy Peaseblossom, one of the attendants upon Queen Titania who, knowing her Majesty's favourite story, told them of



The Wild Swans



Far away, where the swallows take refuge in winter, lived a king who had eleven sons and one daughter, Elise. The eleven brothers—they were all princes—used to go to school with stars on their breasts and swords at their sides. They wrote upon golden slates with diamond pencils, and could read just as well without a book as with one, so there was no mistake about their being real princes. Their sister Elise sat upon a little footstool of looking-glass, and she had a picture-book which had cost the half of a kingdom. Oh, these children were very happy; but it was not to last thus for ever.

Their father, who was king over all the land, married a wicked queen who was not at all kind to the poor children; they found that out on the first day. All was festive at the castle, but when the children wanted to play at having company, instead of having as many cakes and baked apples as ever they wanted, she would only let them have some sand in a tea-cup, and said they must make-believe.

In the following week she sent little Elise into the country to board with some peasants, and it did not take her long to make the king believe so many bad things about the boys, that he cared no longer for them.

"Fly out into the world and look after yourselves," said the wicked queen; "you shall fly about like birds without voices."

But she could not make things as bad for them as she would have liked; they turned into eleven beautiful wild swans. They flew out of the palace window with a weird scream, right across the park and the woods.

It was very early in the morning when they came to the place where their sister Elise was sleeping in the peasant's house. They hovered over the roof of the house, turning and twisting their long necks, and flapping their wings; but no one either heard or saw them. They had to fly away again, and they soared up towards the clouds, far out into the wide world, and they settled in a big, dark wood, which stretched right down to the shore.

Poor little Elise stood in the peasant's room, playing with a green leaf, for she had no other toys. She made a little hole in it, which she looked through at the sun, and it seemed to her as if she saw her brothers' bright eyes. Every time the warm sunbeams shone upon her cheek, it reminded her of their kisses. One day passed just like another. When the wind whistled through the rose-hedges outside the house, it whispered to the roses, "Who can be prettier than you are?" But the roses shook their heads and answered, "Elise!" And when the old woman sat in the doorway reading her Psalms, the wind turned over the leaves and said to the book, "Who can be more pious than you?" "Elise!" answered the book. Both the roses and the book of Psalms only spoke the truth.

She was to go home when she was fifteen, but when the queen saw how pretty she was she got very angry, and her heart was filled with hatred. She would willingly have turned her into a wild swan too, like her brothers, but she did not dare to do it at once, for the king wanted to see his daughter. The queen always went to the bath in the early morning. It was built of marble and adorned with soft cushions and beautiful carpets.

She took three toads, kissed them, and said to the first,

"Sit upon Elise's head when she comes to the bath, so that she may become sluggish like yourself." "Sit upon her forehead," she said to the second, "that she may become ugly like you, and then her father won't know her! Rest upon her heart," she whispered to the third. "Let an evil spirit come over her, which may be a burden to her." Then she put the toads into the clean water, and a green tinge immediately came over it. She called Elise, undressed her, and made her go into the bath; when she ducked under the water, one of the toads got among her hair, the other got on to her forehead, and the third on to her bosom. But when she stood up three scarlet poppies floated on the water; had not the creatures been poisonous, and kissed by the sorceress, they would have been changed into crimson roses, but yet they became flowers from merely having rested a moment on her head and her heart. She was far too good and innocent for the sorcery to have any power over her. When the wicked Queen saw this, she rubbed her over with walnut juice, and smeared her face with some evil-smelling salve. She also matted up her beautiful hair; it would have been impossible to recognise pretty Elise. When her father saw her, he was quite horrified and said that she could not be his daughter. Nobody would have anything to say to her, except the yard dog, and the swallows, and they were only poor dumb animals whose opinion went for nothing.

Poor Elise wept, and thought of her eleven brothers who were all lost. She crept sadly out of the palace and wandered about all day, over meadows and marshes, and into a big forest. She did not know in the least where she wanted to go, but she felt very sad, and longed for her brothers, who, no doubt, like herself had been driven out of the palace. She made up her mind to go and look for them, but she had only been in the wood for a short time when night fell. She had quite lost her way, so she lay down upon the soft moss, said her evening prayer, and rested her head on a little hillock. It was very still and the air was mild, hundreds of glow-worms shone around

her on the grass and in the marsh like green fire. When she gently moved one of the branches over her head, the little shining insects fell over her like a shower of stars. She dreamt about her brothers all night long. Again they were children playing together: they wrote upon the golden slates with their diamond pencils, and she looked at the picture-book which had cost half a kingdom. But they no longer wrote strokes and noughts upon their slates as they used to do; no, they wrote down all their boldest exploits, and everything that they had seen and experienced. Everything in the picture book was alive, the birds sang, and the people walked out of the book, and spoke to Elise and her brothers. When she turned over a page, they skipped back into their places again, so that there should be no confusion among the pictures.

When she woke the sun was already high; it is true she could not see it very well through the thick branches of the lofty forest trees, but the sunbeams cast a golden shimmer around beyond the forest. There was a fresh delicious scent of grass and herbs in the air, and the birds were almost ready to perch upon her shoulders. She could hear the splashing of water, for there were many springs around, which all flowed into a pond with a lovely sandy bottom. It was surrounded with thick bushes, but there was one place which the stags had trampled down and Elise passed through the opening to the water side. It was so transparent, that had not the branches been moved by the breeze, she must have thought that they were painted on the bottom, so plainly was every leaf reflected, both those on which the sun played, and those which were in shade.

When she saw her own face she was quite frightened, it was so brown and ugly, but when she wet her little hand and rubbed her eyes and forehead, her white skin shone through again. Then she took off all her clothes and went into the fresh water. A more beautiful royal child than she, could not be found in all the world.

When she had put on her clothes again, and plaited her

long hair, she went to a sparkling spring and drank some of the water out of the hollow of her hand. Then she wandered further into the wood, though where she was going she had not the least idea. She thought of her brothers, and she thought of a merciful God who would not forsake her. He let the wild crab-apples grow to feed the hungry. He showed her a tree, the branches of which were bending beneath their weight of fruit. Here she made her midday meal, and, having put props under the branches, she walked on into the thickest part of the forest. It was so quiet that she heard her own footsteps, she heard every little withered leaf which bent under her feet. Not a bird was to be seen, not a ray of sunlight pierced the leafy branches, and the tall trunks were so close together that when she looked before her it seemed as if a thick fence of heavy beams hemmed her in on every side. The solitude was such as she had never known before.



It was a very dark night, not a single glow-worm sparkled in the marsh; sadly she lay down to sleep, and it seemed to her as if the branches above her parted asunder, and the Saviour looked down upon her with His loving

eyes, and little angels' heads peeped out above His head and under His arms.

When she woke in the morning she was not sure if she had dreamt this, or whether it was really true.

She walked a little further, when she met an old woman with a basket full of berries, of which she gave her some. Elise asked if she had seen eleven princes ride through the wood. "No," said the old woman, "but yesterday I saw eleven swans, with golden crowns upon their heads, swimming in the stream close by here."

She led Elise a little further to a slope, at the foot of which the stream meandered. The trees on either bank stretched out their rich leafy branches towards each other, and where, from their natural growth, they could not reach each other, they had torn their roots out of the ground, and leant over the water so as to interlace their branches.

Elise said good-bye to the old woman, and walked along by the river till it flowed out into the great open sea.

The beautiful open sea lay before the maiden, but not a sail was to be seen on it, not a single boat. How was she ever to get any further? She looked at the numberless little pebbles on the beach; they were all worn quite round by the water. Glass, iron, stone, whatever was washed up had taken their shapes from the water, which yet was much softer than her little hand. "With all its rolling, it is untiring, and everything hard is smoothed down. I will be just as untiring! Thank you for your lesson, you clear rolling waves! Some time, so my heart tells me, you will bear me to my beloved brothers!"

Eleven white swans' feathers were lying on the sea-weed; she picked them up and made a bunch of them. There were still drops of water on them. Whether these were dew or tears no one could tell. It was very lonely there by the shore, but she did not feel it, for the sea was ever-changing. There were more changes on it in the course of a few hours than could be seen on an inland

fresh water lake in a year. If a big black cloud arose, it was just as if the sea wanted to say, "I can look black too," and then the wind blew up and the waves shewed their white crests. But if the clouds were red and the wind dropped, the sea looked like a rose-leaf, now white, now green. But however still it was, there was always a little gentle motion just by the shore, the water rose and fell softly like the bosom of a sleeping child.

When the sun was just about to go down, Elise saw eleven wild swans with golden crowns upon their heads flying towards the shore. They flew in a swaying line, one behind the other, like a white ribbon streamer. Elise climbed up on to the bank and hid behind a bush; the swans settled close by her and flapped their great white wings.

As soon as the sun had sunk beneath the water, the swans shed their feathers and became eleven handsome princes; they were Elise's brothers. Although they had altered a good deal, she knew them at once; she felt that they must be her brothers and she sprang into their arms, calling them by name. They were delighted when they recognised their little sister who had grown so big and beautiful. They laughed and cried, and told each other how wickedly their stepmother had treated them all.

"We brothers," said the eldest, "have to fly about in the guise of swans, as long as the sun is above the horizon. When it goes down we regain our human shapes. So we always have to look out for a resting-place near sunset, for should we happen to be flying up among the clouds when the sun goes down, we should be hurled to the depths below. We do not live here; there is another land, just as beautiful as this beyond the sea; but the way to it is very long and we have to cross the mighty ocean to get to it. There is not a single island on the way where we can spend the night, only one solitary little rock juts up above the water midway. It is only just big enough for us to stand upon close together, and if there is a heavy sea the water splashes over us,

yet we thank our God for it. We stay there over night in our human forms, and without it we could never revisit our beloved Fatherland, for our flight takes two of the longest days in the year. We are only permitted to visit the home of our fathers once a year, and we dare only stay for eleven days. We hover over this big forest from whence we catch a glimpse of the palace where we were born, and where our father lives; beyond it we can see the high church towers where our mother is buried. We fancy that the trees and bushes here are related to us; and the wild horses gallop over the moors as we used to see them in our childhood. The charcoal burners still sing the old songs we used to dance to when we were children. This is our Fatherland, we are drawn towards it, and here we have found you again, dear little sister! We may stay here two days longer, and then we must fly away again across the ocean, to a lovely country indeed, but it is not our own dear Fatherland! How shall we ever take you with us, we have neither ship nor boat!"

"How can I deliver you!" said their sister, and they went on talking to each other, nearly all night, they only dozed for a few hours.

Elise was awakened in the morning by the rustling of the swans' wings above her; her brothers were again transformed and were wheeling round in great circles, till she lost sight of them in the distance. One of them, the youngest, stayed behind. He laid his head against her bosom, and she caressed it with her fingers. They remained together all day; towards evening the others came back, and as soon as the sun went down they took their natural forms.

"To-morrow we must fly away, and we dare not come back for a whole year, but we can't leave you like this! Have you courage to go with us? My arm is strong enough to carry you over the forest, so surely our united strength ought to be sufficient to bear you across the ocean."

"Oh yes! take me with you," said Elise.

They spent the whole night in weaving a kind of net of the elastic bark of the willow bound together with tough rushes; they made it both large and strong. Elise lay down upon it, and when the sun rose and the brothers became swans again, they took up the net in their bills and flew high up among the clouds with their precious sister, who was fast asleep. The sunbeams fell straight on to her face, so one of the swans flew over her head so that its broad wings should shade her.

They were far from land when Elise woke; she thought she must still be dreaming, it seemed so strange to be carried through the air so high up above the sea. By her side lay a branch of beautiful ripe berries, and a bundle of savoury roots, which her youngest brother had collected for her, and for which she gave him a grateful smile. She knew it was he who flew above her head shading her from the sun. They were so high up that the first ship they saw looked like a gull floating on the water. A great cloud came up behind them like a mountain, and Elise saw the shadow of herself on it, and those of the eleven swans looking like giants. It was a more beautiful picture than any she had ever seen before, but as the sun rose higher, the cloud fell behind, and the shadow picture disappeared.

They flew on and on all day like an arrow whizzing through the air, but they went slower than usual, for now they had their sister to carry. A storm came up, and night was drawing on; Elise saw the sun sinking with terror in her heart, for the solitary rock was nowhere to be seen. The swans seemed to be taking stronger strokes than ever; alas! she was the cause of their not being able to get on faster; as soon as the sun went down they would become men, and they would all be hurled into the sea and drowned. She prayed to God from the bottom of her heart, but still no rock was to be seen! Black clouds gathered, and strong gusts of

wind announced a storm; the clouds looked like a great threatening leaden wave, and the flashes of lightning followed each other rapidly.

The sun was now at the edge of the sea. Elise's heart quaked, when suddenly the swans shot downwards so suddenly, that she thought they were falling, then they hovered again. Half of the sun was below the horizon, and there for the first time she saw the little rock below, which did not look bigger than the head of a seal above the water. The sun sank very quickly, it was no bigger than a star, but her foot touched solid earth. The sun went out like the last sparks of a bit of burning paper; she saw her brothers stand arm in arm around her, but there was only just room enough for them. The waves beat upon the rock and washed over them like drenching rain. The heavens shone with continuous fire, and the thunder rolled, peal upon peal. But the sister and brothers held each other's hands and sang a psalm which gave them comfort and courage.

The air was pure and still at dawn. As soon as the sun rose the swans flew off with Elise, away from the islet. The sea still ran high, it looked from where they were as if the white foam on the dark green water were millions of swans floating on the waves.

When the sun rose higher, Elise saw before her half floating in the air great masses of ice, with shining glaciers on the heights. A palace was perched midway a mile in length, with one bold colonnade built above another. Beneath them swayed palm trees and gorgeous blossoms as big as mill wheels. She asked if this was the land to which she was going, but the swans shook their heads, because what she saw was a mirage; the beautiful and ever changing palace of Fata Morgana. No mortal dared enter it. Elise gazed at it, but as she gazed the palace, gardens and mountains melted away, and in their place stood twenty proud churches with their high towers and pointed windows. She seemed to hear the notes of the organ, but it was the sea she heard. When she got close to the seeming churches,

they changed to a great navy sailing beneath her; but it was only a sea mist floating over the waters. Yes, she saw constant changes passing before her eyes, and now she saw the real land she was bound to. Beautiful blue mountains rose before her with their cedar woods and palaces. Long before the sun went down, she sat among the hills in front of a big cave covered with delicate green creepers. It looked like a piece of embroidery.

"Now we shall see what you will dream here to-night," said the youngest brother, as he showed her where she was to sleep.

"If only I might dream how I could deliver you," she said, and this thought filled her mind entirely. She prayed earnestly to God for His help, and even in her sleep she continued her prayer. It seemed to her that she was flying up to Fata Morgana in her castle in the air. The fairy came towards her, she was charming and brilliant, and yet she was very like the old woman who gave her the berries in the wood, and told her about the swans with the golden crowns.

"Your brothers can be delivered," she said, "but have you courage and endurance enough for it? The sea is indeed softer than your hands, and it moulds the hardest stones, but it does not feel the pain your fingers will feel. It has no heart, and does not suffer the pain and anguish you must feel. Do you see this stinging nettle I hold in my hand? Many of this kind grow round the cave where you sleep; only these and the ones which grow in the church-yards may be used. Mark that! Those you may pluck although they will burn and blister your hands. Crush the nettles with your feet and you will have flax, and of this you must weave eleven coats of mail with long sleeves. Throw these over the eleven wild swans and the charm is broken! But remember that from the moment you begin this work, till it is finished, even if it takes years, you must not utter a word! The first word you say will fall like a murderer's dagger into the hearts of your brothers. Their lives hang on your tongue. Mark this well!"

She touched her hand at the same moment, it was like

burning fire, and woke Elise. It was bright day-light, and close to where she slept lay a nettle like those in her dream. She fell upon her knees with thanks to God and left the cave to begin their work.

She seized the horrid nettles with her delicate hands, and they burnt like fire; great blisters rose on her hands and arms, but she suffered it willingly if only it would deliver her beloved brothers. She crushed every nettle with her bare feet, and twisted it into green flax.

When the sun went down and the brothers came back, they were alarmed at finding her mute; they thought it was some new witchcraft exercised by their wicked step-mother. But when they saw her hands, they understood that it was for their sakes; the youngest brother wept, and wherever his tears fell, she felt no more pain, and the blisters disappeared.

She spent the whole night at her work, for she could not rest till she had delivered her dear brothers. All the following day while her brothers were away she sat solitary, but never had the time flown so fast. One coat of mail was finished and she began the next. Then a hunting-horn sounded among the mountains; she was much frightened, the sound came nearer, and she heard dogs barking. In terror she rushed into the cave and tied the nettles she had collected and woven, into a bundle upon which she sat.

At this moment a big dog bounded forward from the thicket, and another and another, they barked loudly and ran backwards and forwards. In a few minutes all the huntsmen were standing outside the cave, and the handsomest of them was the king of the country. He stepped up to Elise: never had he seen so lovely a girl.

"How came you here, beautiful child?" he said.

Elise shook her head; she dared not speak; the salvation and the lives of her brothers depended upon her silence. She hid her hands under her apron, so that the king should not see what she suffered.

"Come with me!" he said; "you cannot stay here

If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in silks and velvets, put a golden crown upon your head, and you shall live with me and have your home in my richest palace!" Then he lifted her upon his horse, she wept and wrung her hands, but the king said, "I only think of your happiness; you will thank me one day for what I am doing!" Then he darted off across the mountains, holding her before him on his horse, and the huntsmen followed.

When the sun went down, the royal city with churches and cupolas lay before them, and the king led her into the palace, where great fountains played in the marble halls, and where walls and ceilings were adorned with paintings, but she had no eyes for them, she only wept and sorrowed; passively she allowed the women to dress her in royal robes, to twist pearls into her hair, and to draw gloves on to her blistered hands.

She was dazzlingly lovely as she stood there in all her magnificence; the courtiers bent low before her, and the king wooed her as his bride, although the archbishop shook his head, and whispered that he feared the beautiful wood maiden was a witch, who had dazzled their eyes and infatuated the king.

The king refused to listen to him, he ordered the music to play, the richest food to be brought, and the loveliest girls to dance before her. She was led through scented gardens into gorgeous apartments, but nothing brought a smile to her lips, or into her eyes, sorrow sat there like a heritage and a possession for all time. Last of all, the king opened the door of a little chamber close by the room where she was to sleep. It was adorned with costly green carpets, and made to exactly resemble the cave where he found her. On the floor lay the bundle of flax she had spun from the nettles, and from the ceiling hung the shirt of mail which was already finished. One of the huntsmen had brought all these things away as curiosities.

"Here you may dream that you are back in your former home!" said the king. "Here is the work upon

which you were engaged; in the midst of your splendour, it may amuse you to think of those times."

When Elise saw all these things so dear to her heart, a smile for the first time played about her lips, and the blood rushed back to her cheeks. She thought of the deliverance of her brothers, and she kissed the king's hand; he pressed her to his heart, and ordered all the church bells to ring marriage peals. The lovely dumb girl from the woods was to be queen of the country.

The archbishop whispered evil words into the ear of the king, but they did not reach his heart. The wedding was to take place, and the archbishop himself had to put the crown upon her head. In his anger he pressed the golden circlet so tightly upon her head as to give her pain. But a heavier circlet pressed upon her heart, her grief for her brothers, so she thought nothing of the bodily pain. Her lips were sealed, a single word from her mouth would cost her brothers their lives, but her eyes were full of love for the good and handsome king, who did everything he could to please her. Every day she grew more and more attached to him, and longed to confide in him, tell him her sufferings; but dumb she must remain, and in silence must bring her labour to completion. Therefore at night she stole away from his side into her secret chamber, which was decorated like a cave, and here she knitted one shirt after another. When she came to the seventh, all her flax was worked up; she knew that these nettles which she was to use grew in the churchyard, but she had to pluck them herself. How was she to get there? "Oh, what is the pain of my fingers compared with the anguish of my heart," she thought. "I must venture out, the good God will not desert me!" With as much terror in her heart, as if she were doing some evil deed, she stole down one night into the moonlit garden, and through the long alleys out into the silent streets to the churchyard. There she saw, sitting on a gravestone, a group of hideous ghouls, who took off their tattered garments, as if they were about to bathe, and then they dug down into the freshly-made

graves with their skinny fingers, and tore the flesh from the bodies and devoured it. Elise had to pass close by them, and they fixed their evil eyes upon her, but she said a prayer as she passed, picked the stinging nettles and hurried back to the palace with them.

Only one person saw her, but that was the archbishop, who watched while others slept. Surely now all his bad opinions of the queen were justified; all was not as it should be with her, she must be a witch, and therefore she had bewitched the king and all the people.

He told the king in the confessional what he had seen and what he feared. When those bad words passed his lips, the pictures of the saints shook their heads as if to say: it is not so, Elise is innocent. The archbishop however took it differently, and thought that they were bearing witness against her, and shaking their heads at her sin. Two big tears rolled down the king's cheeks, and he went home with doubt in his heart. He pretended to sleep at night, but no quiet sleep came to his eyes. He perceived how Elise got up and went to her private closet. Day by day his face grew darker, Elise saw it but could not imagine what was the cause of it. It alarmed her, and what was she not already suffering in her heart because of her brothers? Her salt tears ran down upon the royal purple velvet, they lay upon it like sparkling diamonds, and all who saw their splendour wished to be queen.

She had, however, almost reached the end of her labours, only one shirt of mail was wanting, but again she had no more flax and not a single nettle was left. Once more, for the last time, she must go to the churchyard to pluck a few handfuls. She thought with dread of the solitary walk and the horrible ghouls; but her will was as strong as her trust in God.

Elise went, but the king and the archbishop followed her, they saw her disappear within the grated gateway of the churchyard. When they followed they saw the ghouls sitting on the gravestone as Elise had seen them before: and the king turned away his head because he thought

she was among them, she, whose head this very evening had rested on his breast.

"The people must judge her," he groaned, and the people judged. "Let her be consumed in the glowing flames!"

She was led away from her beautiful royal apartments to a dark damp dungeon, where the wind whistled through the grated window. Instead of velvet and silk they gave her the bundle of nettles she had gathered to lay her head upon. The hard burning shirts of mail were to be her covering, but they could have given her nothing more precious.

She set to work again with many prayers to God. Outside her prison the street boys sang derisive songs about her, and not a soul comforted her with a kind word.

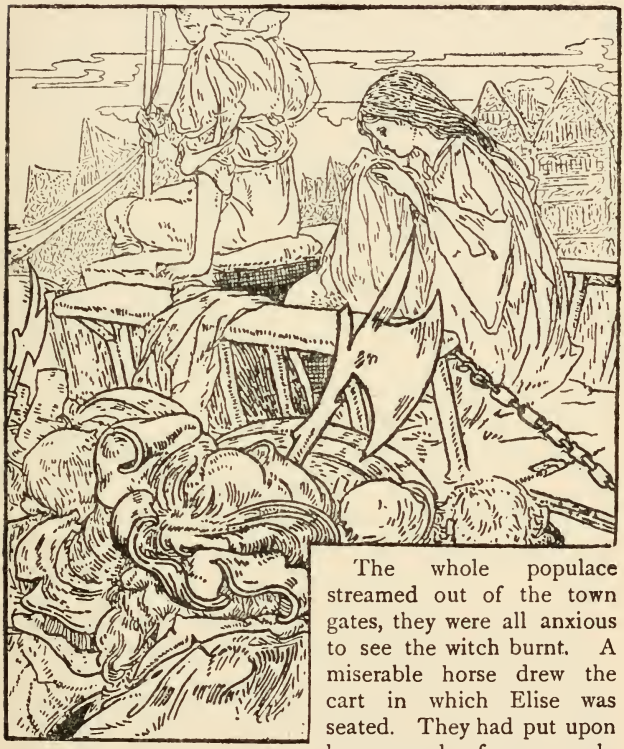
Towards the evening she heard the rustle of swans' wings close to her window; it was her youngest brother, at last he had found her. He sobbed aloud with joy although he knew that the coming night might be her last, but then her work was almost done and her brothers were there.

The archbishop came to spend her last hours with her as he had promised the king. She shook her head at him, and by looks and gestures begged him to leave her. She had only this night in which to finish her work, or else all would be wasted, all—her pain, tears and sleepless nights. The archbishop went away with bitter words against her, but poor Elise knew that she was innocent, and she went on with her work.

The little mice ran about the floor bringing nettles to her feet, so as to give what help they could, and a thrush sat on the grating of the window where he sang all night, as merrily as he could to keep up her courage.

It was still only dawn, and the sun would not rise for an hour when the eleven brothers stood at the gate of the palace, begging to be taken to the king. This could not be done, was the answer, for it was still night; the king was asleep and no one dared wake him. All their entreaties and threats were useless; the watch turned out and even the king himself came to see what was the matter;

but just then the sun rose, and no more brothers were to be seen, only eleven wild swans hovering over the palace.



The whole populace streamed out of the town gates, they were all anxious to see the witch burnt. A miserable horse drew the cart in which Elise was seated. They had put upon her a smock of green sacking, and all her beautiful long hair hung loose from her lovely head. Her cheeks were deathly pale, and her lips moved softly, while her fingers unceasingly twisted the green yarn. Even on the way to her death she could not abandon her unfinished work. Ten shirts lay completed

at her feet—she laboured away at the eleventh, amid the scoffing insults of the populace.

"Look at the witch how she mutters. She has never a book of psalms in her hands, no, there she sits with her loathsome sorcery. Tear it away from her, into a thousand bits!"

The crowd pressed around her to destroy her work, but just then eleven white swans flew down and perched upon the cart flapping their wings. The crowd gave way before them in terror.

"It is a sign from Heaven! She is innocent!" they whispered, but they dared not say it aloud.

The executioner seized her by the hand, but she hastily threw the eleven shirts over the swans, who were immediately transformed to eleven handsome princes; but the youngest had a swan's wing in place of an arm, for one sleeve was wanting to his shirt of mail, she had not been able to finish it.

"Now I may speak! I am innocent."

The populace who saw what had happened bowed down before her as if she had been a saint, but she sank lifeless in her brother's arms; so great had been the strain, the terror and the suffering she had endured.

"Yes, innocent she is indeed," said the eldest brother, and he told them all that had happened.



Whilst he spoke a wonderful fragrance spread around, as of millions of roses. Every faggot in the pile had taken root and shot out branches, and a great high hedge of red roses had arisen. At the very top was one pure white blossom, it shone like a star, and the king broke it off and laid it on Elise's bosom, and she woke with joy and peace in her heart.

All the church bells began to ring of their own accord, and the singing birds flocked around them. Surely such a bridal procession went back to the palace as no king had ever seen before!

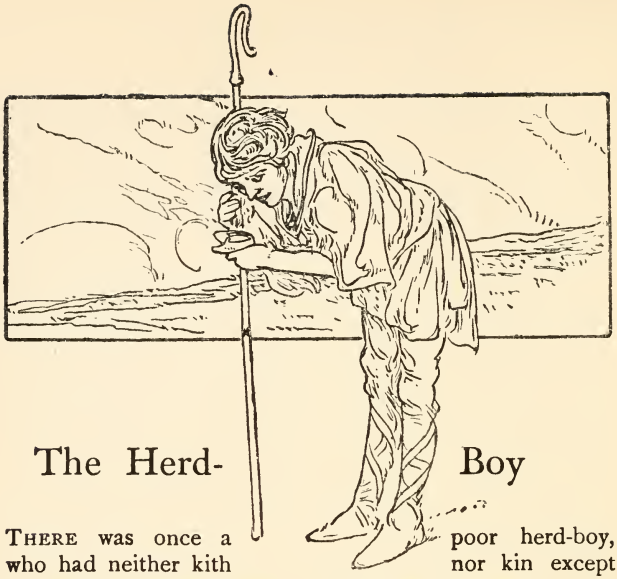
It was agreed that Peaseblossom had told a very pretty story, and the fairy felt so flattered that he would have liked to tell another but the king, turning to Titania, said:

"My queen, your Peaseblossom has told so charming a story that perhaps another of your attendants will tell us one also."

"Certainly," answered the queen, gratified to find that her favourite story was so well-liked by others. She looked towards her little retinue of attendant fays and wondered which one should be next. "Which shall it be?" she asked, and they all stood up at once. "Moth, I think, can tell us a pretty story of how a young man who had been kind to the fairies was helped by them to kill a cruel giant and to win a beautiful princess for his bride."

"I can," replied Moth readily, and skipped to the stool by the throne where he at once began telling of the adventures which befell





The Herd-Boy

THERE was once a poor herd-boy, who had neither kith nor kin except his stepmother, who was a wicked woman, and hardly allowed him food or clothing. Thus the poor boy suffered great privation; during all the livelong day he had to tend cattle, and scarcely ever got more than a morsel of bread morning and evening.

One day his stepmother had gone out without leaving him any food; he had, therefore, to drive his cattle to the field fasting, and being very hungry, he wept bitterly. But at the approach of noon he dried his tears, and went up on a green hill, where he was in the habit of resting, while the sun was hot in the summer. On this hill it was always cool and dewy under the shady trees; but now he remarked that there was no dew, that the ground was dry, and the grass trampled down. This seemed to him very singular, and he wondered who could have trodden down the green grass. While thus sitting and thinking, he perceived something that lay glittering in the sunshine. Springing up to see what it might be, he found it was a pair of very, very small shoes of the whitest and clearest glass. The boy now felt quite happy again, forgot his

hunger, and amused himself the whole day with the little glass shoes.

In the evening, when the sun had sunk behind the forest, the herd-boy called his cattle and drove them to the village. When he had gone some way, he was met by a very little boy, who in a friendly tone greeted him with "Good evening!" "Good evening again," answered the herd-boy. "Hast thou found my shoes, which I lost this morning in the green grass?" asked the little boy. The herd-boy answered: "Yes, I have found them; but, my good little fellow, let me keep them. I intended to give them to my stepmother, and then, perhaps, I should have got a little meat, when I came home." But the boy prayed so earnestly, "Give me back my shoes; another time I will be as kind to thee," that the herd-boy returned him the shoes. The little one then, greatly delighted, gave him a friendly nod, and went springing away.

The herd-boy now collected his cattle together, and continued his way homewards. When he reached his dwelling it was already dark, and his stepmother chided him for returning so late. "There's still some porridge in the pot," said she; "eat now, and pack thyself off to bed, so that thou canst get up in the morning betimes, like other folks." The poor herd-boy durst not return any answer to these hard words, but ate, and then slunk to bed in the hayloft, where he was accustomed to sleep. The whole night he dreamed of nothing but the little boy and his little glass shoes.

Early in the morning, before the sun shone from the east, the boy was waked by his stepmother's voice: "Up with thee, thou sluggard! It is broad day, and the animals are not to stand hungry for thy sloth." He instantly rose, got a bit of bread, and drove the cattle to the pasture.

When he came to the green hill, which was wont to be so cool and shady, he again wondered to see that the dew was all swept from the grass, and the ground dry, even more so than on the preceding day. While he thus sat

thinking, he observed something lying in the grass and glittering in the bright sunshine. Springing towards it, he found it was a very, very little red cap set round with small golden bells. At this he was greatly delighted, forgot his hunger, and amused himself all day with the little elegant cap.

In the evening, when the sun had sunk behind the forest, the herd-boy gathered his cattle together, and drove them towards the village. When on his way, he was met by a very little and, at the same time, very fair damsel. She greeted him in a friendly tone with "Good evening!" "Good evening again," answered the lad. The damsel then said: "Hast thou found my cap, which I lost this morning in the green grass?" The boy answered: "Yes, I have found it: but let me keep it, my pretty maid. I thought of giving it to my wicked stepmother, and then, perhaps, I shall get a little meat when I go home." But the little damsel entreated so urgently, "Give me back my cap; another time I will be as good to thee," that the lad gave her the little cap, when she appeared highly delighted, gave him a friendly nod, and sprang off.

On his return home, he was received as usual by his cruel stepmother, and dreamed the whole night of the little damsel and her little red cap.

In the morning he was turned out fasting, and on coming to the hill, found it was drier than on either of the preceding days, and that the grass was trodden down in large rings. It then entered his mind all that he had heard of the little *elves*, how in the summer nights they were wont to dance in the dewy grass, and he found that these must be *elfin-rings*, or *elfin-dances*. While sitting absorbed in thought, he chanced to strike his foot against a little bell that lay in the grass, and which gave forth so sweet a sound, that all the cattle came running together, and stood still to listen. Now the boy was delighted, and could do nothing but play with the little bell, till he forgot his troubles and the cattle forgot to graze. And so the day passed much more quickly than can be imagined.

When it drew towards evening, and the sun was level with the tree-tops, the boy called his cattle and prepared to return home. But let him entice and call them as he might, they were not to be drawn from the pasture, for it was a delightful grassy spot. Then thought the boy to himself, "Perhaps they will pay more heed to the little bell." So drawing forth the bell, he tingled it as he went along the way. In one moment the bell-cow came running after him, and was followed by the rest of the herd. At this the boy was overjoyed, for he was well aware what an advantage the little bell would be to him. As he was going on, a very little old man met him, and kindly bade him a good evening. "Good evening again," said the boy. The old man asked: "Hast thou found my little bell, which I lost this morning in the green grass?" The herd-boy answered: "Yes, I have found it." The old man said: "Then give it me back." "No," answered the boy, "I am not so doltish as you may think. The day before yesterday I found two small glass shoes, which a little boy wheedled from me. Yesterday I found a cap, which I gave to a little damsel; and now you come to take from me the little bell, which is so good for calling the cattle. Other finders get a reward for their pains, but I get nothing." The little man then used many fair words, with the view of recovering his bell, but all to no purpose. At last he said: "Give me back the little bell, and I will give thee another, with which thou mayest call thy cattle; thou shalt, moreover, obtain three wishes." These seemed to the boy no unfavourable terms, and he at once agreed to them, adding, "As I may wish whatever I will, I will wish to be a king, and I will wish to have a great palace, and also a very beautiful queen." "Thou hast wished no trifling wishes," said the old man, "but bear well in mind what I now tell thee. To-night when all are sleeping, thou shalt go hence, till thou comest to a royal palace, which lies due north. Take this pipe of bone. If thou fallest into trouble, blow it; if thou afterwards fallest into great trouble, blow it again; but if, on a third occasion, thou findest

thyself in still greater peril, break the pipe in two, and I will help thee, as I have promised." The boy gave the old man many thanks for his gifts, and the elf-king—for it was he—went his way. But the boy bent his steps homewards, rejoicing as he went along, that he should so soon escape from tending cattle for his wicked stepmother.

When he reached the village it was already dark, and his stepmother had been long awaiting his coming. She was in a great rage, so that the poor lad got blows instead of food. "This will not last long," thought the boy, comforting himself with the reflection, as he went up to his hayloft, where he laid himself down and slumbered for a short time. About midnight, long before the cock crew, he arose, slipped out of the house, and began his journey in a northward direction, as the old man had enjoined. He travelled incessantly, over hill and dale, and twice did the sun rise and twice set, while he was still on his way.

Towards evening on the third day he came to a royal palace, which was so spacious that he thought he should never again see the like. He went to the kitchen and asked for employment. "What dost thou know, and what canst thou do?" inquired the master-cook. "I can tend cattle in the pasture," answered the boy. The master-cook said: "The king is in great want of a herd-boy; but it will, no doubt, be with thee as with the others, that every day thou losest one of the herd." The boy answered: "Hitherto I have never lost any beast that I drove to the field." He was then taken into the king's service, and tended the king's cattle; but the wolf never got a beast from him: so he was well esteemed by all the king's servants.

One evening, as the herd-boy was driving his cattle home, he observed a beautiful young damsel standing at a window and listening to his song. Though he seemed hardly to notice her, he, nevertheless, felt a glow suffused over him. Some time passed in this manner, the herd-boy being delighted every time he saw the young maiden; though he was still ignorant that she was the king's

daughter. It happened one day that the young girl came to him as he was driving the herd to their pasture. She had with her a little snow-white lamb, and begged him in a friendly tone to take charge of her lamb, and protect it from the wolves in the forest. At this the herd-boy was so confused that he could neither answer nor speak. But he took the lamb with him, and found his greatest pleasure in guarding it, and the animal attached itself to him, as a dog to its master. From that day the herd-boy frequently enjoyed the sight of the fair princess. In the morning, when he drove his cattle to the pasture, she would stand at the window listening to his song; but in the evening, when he returned from the forest, she would descend to caress her little lamb, and say a few friendly words to the herd-boy.

Time rolled on. The herd-boy had grown up into a comely, vigorous young man; and the princess had sprung up and was become the fairest maiden that could be found far or near. Nevertheless, she came every evening, according to her early custom, to caress her lamb. But one day the princess was missing and could nowhere be found. This event caused a great sorrow and commotion in the royal court, for the princess was beloved by every one; but the king and queen, as was natural, grieved the most intensely of all. The king sent forth a proclamation over the whole land, that whosoever should recover his daughter should be rewarded with her hand and half the kingdom. This brought a number of princes, and knights, and warriors from the east and the west. Cased in steel they rode forth with arms and attendants, to seek the lost princess; but few were they that returned from their wanderings, and those that did return brought no tidings of her they went in quest of. The king and queen were now inconsolable, and thought that they had sustained an irreparable loss. The herd-boy, as before, drove his cattle to the pasture but it was in sadness, for the king's fair daughter engrossed his thoughts every day and every hour.

One night in a dream the little elfin king seemed to

stand before him and to say: "To the north! to the north! there thou wilt find thy queen." At this the young man was so overjoyed that he sprang up, and as he woke, there stood the little man, who nodded to him, and repeated: "To the north! to the north!" He then vanished, leaving the youth in doubt whether or not it were an illusion. As soon as it was day he went to the hall of the palace, and requested an audience of the king. At this all the royal servants wondered, and the master-cook said: "Thou hast served for so many years that thou mayest, no doubt, get thy wages increased without speaking to the king himself." But the young man persisted in his request, and let it be understood that he had something very different in his mind. On entering the royal apartment, the king demanded his errand, when the young man said: "I have served you faithfully for many years, and now desire permission to go and seek for the princess." Hereupon the king grew angry and said: "How canst thou, a herd-boy, think of doing that which no warrior nor prince has been able to accomplish?" But the youth answered boldly, that he would either discover the princess or, for her sake, lay down his life. The king then let his anger pass, and called to mind the old proverb: *A heart worthy of scarlet often lies under a coarse woollen cloak.* He therefore gave orders that the herd-boy should be equipped with a charger and all things requisite. But the youth said: "I reck not of riding; give me but your word and permission, together with means sufficient." The king then wished him success in his enterprise; but all the boys and other servants in the court laughed at the herd-boy's rash undertaking.

The young man journeyed towards the north, as he had been instructed by the elf-king, and proceeded on and on until he could not be far distant from the world's end. When he had thus travelled over mountains and desolate ways, he came at length to a great lake, in the midst of which there was a fair island, and on the island a royal palace, much more spacious than the one whence he came. He went down to the water's edge, and surveyed

the palace on every side. While thus viewing it, he perceived a damsel with golden locks standing at one of the windows, and making signs with a silken band, such as the princess's lamb was accustomed to wear. At this sight the young man's heart leaped in his breast; for it rushed into his mind that the damsel could be no other than the princess herself. He now began to consider how he should cross over the water to the great palace; but could hit upon no plan. At last the thought occurred to him that he would make a trial whether the little elves would afford him some assistance; and he took forth his pipe, and blew a long-continued strain. He had scarcely ceased, when he heard a voice behind him, saying "Good evening." "Good evening again," answered the youth, turning about: when just before him there stood the little boy whose glass shoes he had found in the grass. "What dost thou wish of me?" asked the elfin boy. The other answered: "I wish thee to convey me across the water to the royal palace." The boy replied: "Place thyself on my back." The youth did so; and at the same instant the boy changed his form and became an immensely huge hawk, that darted through the air, and stopped not until it reached the island as the young man had requested.

He now went up to the hall of the palace and asked for employment. "What dost thou understand and what canst thou do?" inquired the master-cook. "I can take charge of cattle," answered the youth. The master-cook then said: "The giant is just now in great want of a herdsman; but it will, I dare say, be with thee as with the others; for if a beast by chance is lost, thy life is forfeited." The youth answered: "This seems to me a hard condition; but I will, nevertheless, agree to it." The master-cook then accepted his service, and he was to commence on the following day.

The young man now drove the giant's cattle, and sung his song, and rang his little bell, as he had formerly done; and the princess sat at her window, and listened, and made signs to him that he should not appear to notice her. In

the evening he drove the herd from the forest, and was met by the giant, who said to him : "Thy life is in the place of any one that may be missing." But not a beast was wanting, let the giant count them as he would. Now the giant was quite friendly, and said : "Thou shalt be my herdsman all thy days." He then went down to the lake, loosed his enchanted ship, and rode thrice round the island, as he was wont to do.

During the giant's absence the princess stationed herself at the window and sang :—

"To-night, to-night, thou herdsman bold,
Goes the cloud from under my star.
And if thou comest hither, then will I be thine,
My crown I will gladly give thee."

The young man listened to her song, and understood from it that he was to go in the night and deliver the princess. He therefore went away without appearing to notice anything. But when it was late, and all were sunk in deep sleep, he steadily approached the tower, placed himself before the window, and sang :—

"To-night will wait thy herdsman true,
Will sad stand under thy window ;
And if thou comest down, thou mayest one day be mine,
While the shadows fall so wildly."

The princess whispered : "I am bound with chains of gold, come and break them." The young man now knew no other course than again to blow with his pipe a very long-continued strain ; when instantly he heard a voice behind him saying "Good evening." "Good evening again," answered the youth, looking round ; when there stood the little elf-king, from whom he had got the little bell and the pipe. "What wilt thou with me?" inquired the old man. The young man answered : "I beseech you to convey me and the princess hence." The little man said "Follow me." They then ascended to the maiden's tower ; the castle gate opened spontaneously, and when the

old man touched the chain, it burst in fragments. All three then went down to the margin of the lake, when the elf-king sang :—

> "Thou little pike in the water must go,
> Come, come, hastily !
> A princess fair on thy back shall ride,
> And eke a king so mighty."

At the same moment appeared the little damsel, whose cap the herd-boy had found in the grass. She sprang down to the lake, and was instantly changed into a large pike that sported about in the water. Then said the elf-king : "Sit ye on the back of the pike. But the princess must not be terrified, let what may happen ; for then will my power be at an end." Having so said, the old man vanished ; but the youth and the fair princess followed his injunctions, and the pike bore them rapidly along through the billows.

While all this was taking place, the giant awoke, looked through the window, and perceived the herd-boy floating on the water together with the young princess. Instantly snatching up his eagle-plumage, he flew after them. When the pike heard the clapping of the giant's wings, it dived far down under the surface of the water, whereat the princess was so terrified that she uttered a scream. Then was the elf-king's power at an end, and the giant seized the two fugitives in his talons. On his return to the island he caused the young herdsman to be cast into a dark dungeon, full fifteen fathoms underground ; but the princess was again placed in her tower, and strictly watched, lest she should again attempt to escape.

The youth now lay in the captives' tower, and was in deep affliction at finding himself unable to deliver the princess, and, at the same time, having most probably forfeited his own life. The words of the elfin king now occurred to his memory : "If, on a third occasion, thou findest thyself in great peril, break the pipe in two, and I will help thee." As a last resource, therefore, he drew

forth the little pipe and broke it in two. At the same moment he heard behind him the words "Good evening." "Good evening again," answered the youth; and when he looked round there stood the little old man close by him, who asked: "What wilt thou with me?" The young man answered: "I wish to deliver the princess, and to convey her home to her father." The old man then led him through many locked doors and many splendid apartments till they came to a spacious hall, filled with all kinds of weapons, swords, spears, and axes, of which some shone like polished steel, others like burnished gold. The old man kindled a fire on the hearth, and said: "Undress thyself!" The young man did so, and the little man burnt his old garments. He then went to a large iron chest, out of which he took a costly suit of armour, resplendent with the purest gold. "Dress thyself," said he: the young man did so. When he was thus armed from head to foot, the old man bound a sharp sword by his side, and said: "It is decreed that the giant shall fall by this sword, and this armour no steel can penetrate." The young herdsman felt quite at ease in the golden armour, and moved as gracefully as if he had been a prince of the highest degree. They then returned to the dark dungeon; the youth thanked the elf-king for his timely succour, and they parted from each other.

Till a late hour there was a great bustle and hurrying in the whole palace; for the giant was on that day to celebrate his marriage with the beautiful princess, and had invited many of his kin to the feast. The princess was clad in the most sumptuous manner, and decorated with a crown and rings of gold, and other costly ornaments, which had been worn by the giant's mother. The health of the wedded pair was then drunk amid all kinds of rejoicing, and there was no lack of good cheer, both of meat and drink. But the bride wept without intermission, and her tears were so hot that they felt like fire on her cheeks.

When night approached, and the giant was about to conduct his bride to the nuptial chamber, he sent his pages

to fetch the young herdsman, who lay in the dungeon. But when they entered the prison, the captive had disappeared, and in his stead there stood a bold warrior, with sword in hand, and completely armed. At this apparition the young men were frightened and fled; but were followed by the herdsman, who thus ascended to the court of the palace, where the guests were assembled to witness his death. When the giant cast his eyes on the doughty warrior, he was exasperated, and exclaimed: "Out upon thee, thou base Troll!" As he spoke his eyes became so piercing that they saw through the young herdsman's armour; but the fearless youth said: "Here shalt thou strive with me for thy fair bride." The giant was not inclined to stay, and was about to withdraw; but the herdsman drew his sword, which blazed like a flame of fire. When the giant recognized the sword, under which he was doomed to fall, he was terror-struck and sank on the earth; but the young herdsman advanced boldly, swung round his sword, and struck a blow so powerful that the giant's head was separated from his carcase. Such was his end.

On witnessing this exploit, the wedding-guests were overcome with fear, and departed, each to his home; but the princess ran forth and thanked the brave herdsman for having saved her. They then proceeded to the water, loosed the giant's enchanted ship, and rowed away from the island. On their arrival at the king's court, there was great joy that the king had recovered his daughter, for whom he had mourned so long. There was afterwards a sumptuous wedding, and the young herdsman obtained the king's fair daughter. They lived happily for very many years, and had many beautiful children.



Moth's story was liked very much and Titania was so pleased that her two fairies had told such pretty tales that she turned to the king saying,

"My dear Oberon, will not one of your people tell us a story next?"

"Certainly," replied the king, and he at once called Puck to him and asked him if he did not know an amusing story which he could tell them.

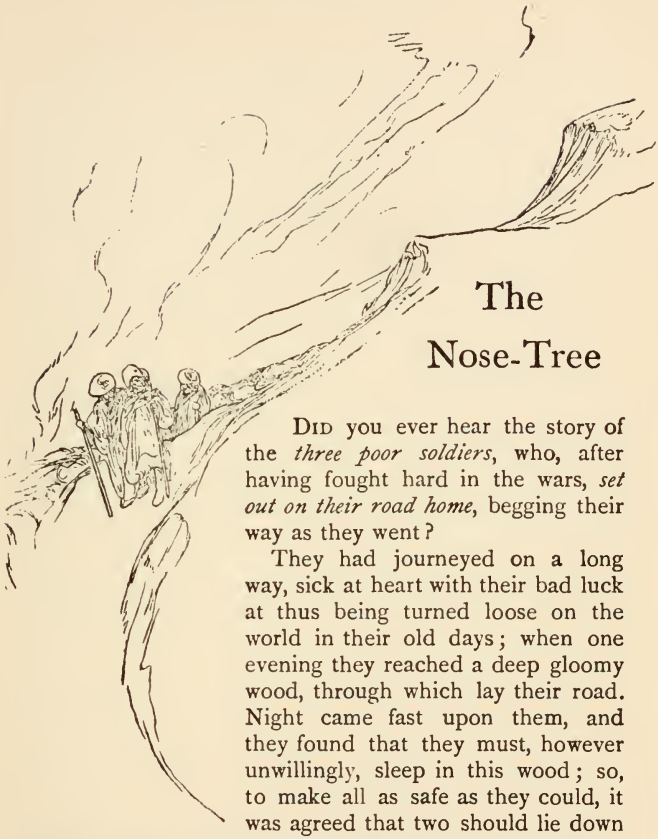
"Your Majesty," said Puck, in a serious tone, "I can tell you all the stories that have ever been told, or that ever will be told. Which one will you have?"

"Something funny," said the king.

Puck considered for a moment, then he said, "I can tell you about a very funny thing if you have not heard it before. Ariel has boasted that he could put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes, but I can tell you of a nose which grew and grew and grew until it would have gone right round the earth which would have been a much more wonderful kind of girdle than Ariel could have managed."

"Tell it us," answered Oberon, and Puck turning a back somersault landed neatly on the tale-teller's stool and commenced the story of





The Nose-Tree

Did you ever hear the story of the *three poor soldiers*, who, after having fought hard in the wars, *set out on their road home*, begging their way as they went?

They had journeyed on a long way, sick at heart with their bad luck at thus being turned loose on the world in their old days; when one evening they reached a deep gloomy wood, through which lay their road. Night came fast upon them, and they found that they must, however unwillingly, sleep in this wood; so, to make all as safe as they could, it was agreed that two should lie down and sleep, while a third sat up and watched, lest wild beasts should break in and tear them to pieces. When he was tired he was to wake one of the others, and sleep in his turn; and so on with the third, so as to share the work fairly among them.

The two who were to rest first soon lay down and fell fast asleep; and the other made himself a good fire under the trees, and sat down by its side to keep watch. He had

D151549

not sat long before, all of a sudden, up came a little dwarf in a red jacket. "Who is there?" said he. "A friend," said the soldier. "What sort of a friend?" "An old broken soldier," said the other, "with his two comrades, who have nothing left to live on; come, sit down and warm yourself." "Well, my worthy fellow," said the little man, "I will do what I can for you; take this and show it to your comrades in the morning." So he took out an old cloak and gave it to the soldier: telling him, that whenever he put it over his shoulders anything that he wished for would be done for him. Then the little man made him a bow and walked away.

The second soldier's turn to watch soon came, and the first laid him down to sleep; but the second man had not sat by himself long before up came the dwarf in the red jacket again. The soldier treated him in as friendly a way as his comrade had done, and the little man gave him a purse, which he told him would be always full of gold, let him draw as much as he would out of it.

Then the third soldier's turn to watch came; and he also had little Red-jacket for his guest, who gave him a wonderful horn, that drew crowds around it whenever it was played, and made every one forget his business to come and dance to its beautiful music.

In the morning each told his story, and showed the gift he had got from the elf: and as they all liked each other very much, and were old friends, they agreed to travel together to see the world, and, for a while, only to make use of the wonderful purse. And thus they spent their time very joyously; till at last they began to be tired of this roving life, and thought they should like to have a home of their own. So the first soldier put his old cloak on, and wished for a fine castle. In a moment it stood before their eyes: fine gardens and green lawns spread round it, and flocks of sheep, and goats, and herds of oxen were grazing about; and out of the gate came a grand coach with three dapple-grey horses, to meet them and bring them home.

All this was very well for a time, but they found it would not do to stay at home always; so they got together all their rich clothes, and jewels, and money, and ordered their coach with three dapple-grey horses, and set out on a journey to see a neighbouring king. Now this king had an only daughter, and as he saw the three soldiers travelling in such grand style, he took them for king's sons, and so gave them a kind welcome. One day, as the second soldier was walking with the princess, she saw that he had the wonderful purse in his hand. Then she asked him what it was, and he was foolish enough to tell her,—though, indeed, it did not much signify what he said, for she was a fairy, and knew all the wonderful things that the three soldiers brought. Now this princess was very cunning and artful; so she set to work and made a purse, so like the soldier's that no one would know the one from the other; and then she asked him to come and see her, and made him drink some wine that she had got ready for him, and which soon made him fall fast asleep. Then she felt in his pocket, and took away the wonderful purse, and left the one she had made in its place.

The next morning the soldiers set out home; and soon after they reached their castle, happening to want some money, they went to their purse for it, and found something indeed in it; but to their great sorrow, when they had emptied it, none came in the place of what they took. Then the cheat was soon found out; for the second soldier knew where he had been, and how he had told the story to the princess, and he guessed that she had played him a trick. "Alas!" cried he, "poor wretches that we are, what shall we do?" "Oh!" said the first soldier, "let no grey hairs grow for this mishap: I will soon get the purse back." So he threw his cloak across his shoulders, and wished himself in the princess's chamber.

There he found her sitting alone, telling up her gold, that fell around her in a shower from the wonderful purse.

But the soldier stood looking at her too long; for she turned round, and the moment she saw him she started up

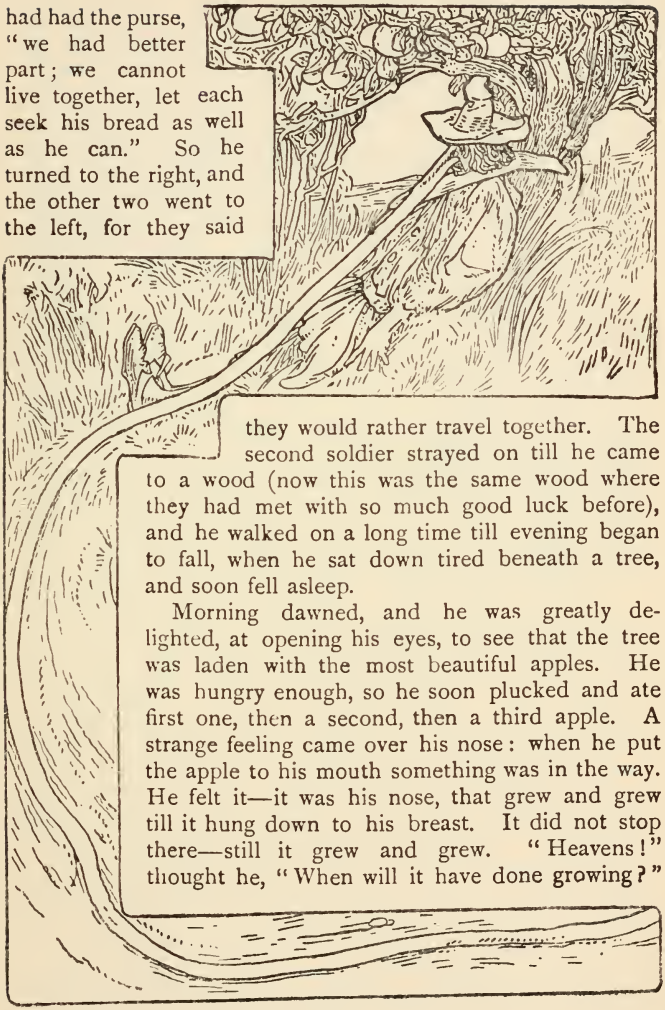
and cried out with all her force, "Thieves! thieves!" so that the whole court came running in, and tried to seize on him. The poor soldier now began to be dreadfully frightened in his turn, and thought it was high time to make the best of his way off; so, without thinking of the ready way of travelling that his cloak gave him, he ran to the window, opened it, and jumped out; and unluckily, in his haste, his cloak caught and was left hanging, to the great joy of the princess, who knew its worth.

The poor soldier made the best of his way home to his comrades on foot, and in a very downcast mood; but the third soldier told him to keep up his heart, and took his horn and blew a merry tune. At the first blast a countless troop of foot and horse come rushing to their aid, and they set out to make war against their enemy. Then the king's palace was besieged, and he was told that he must give up the purse and cloak, or that not one stone should be left upon another. And the king went into his daughter's chamber and talked with her; but she said, "Let me try first if I cannot beat them some way or another." So she thought of a cunning scheme to overreach them; and dressing herself out as a poor girl, with a basket on her arm, she set out by night with her maid, and went into the enemy's camp, as if she wanted to sell trinkets.

In the morning she began to ramble about, singing ballads so beautifully that all the tents were left empty, and the soldiers ran round in crowds, and thought of nothing but hearing her sing. Amongst the rest came the soldier to whom the horn belonged, and as soon as she saw him she winked to her maid, who slipped slily through the crowd, and went into his tent where it hung, and stole it away. This done, they both got safely back to the palace, the besieging army went away, the three wonderful gifts were all left in the hands of the princess, and the three soldiers were as penniless and forlorn as when little Red-jacket found them in the wood.

Poor fellows! they began to think what was now to be done. "Comrades," at last said the second soldier, who

had had the purse, "we had better part; we cannot live together, let each seek his bread as well as he can." So he turned to the right, and the other two went to the left, for they said



they would rather travel together. The second soldier strayed on till he came to a wood (now this was the same wood where they had met with so much good luck before), and he walked on a long time till evening began to fall, when he sat down tired beneath a tree, and soon fell asleep.

Morning dawned, and he was greatly delighted, at opening his eyes, to see that the tree was laden with the most beautiful apples. He was hungry enough, so he soon plucked and ate first one, then a second, then a third apple. A strange feeling came over his nose: when he put the apple to his mouth something was in the way. He felt it—it was his nose, that grew and grew till it hung down to his breast. It did not stop there—still it grew and grew. "Heavens!" thought he, "When will it have done growing?"

And well might he ask, for by this time it reached the ground as he sat on the grass,—and thus it kept creeping on, till he could not bear its weight or raise himself up; and it seemed as if it would never end, for already it stretched its enormous length all through the wood, over hill and dale.

Meantime his comrades were journeying on, till on a sudden one of them stumbled against something. "What can that be?" said the other. They looked, and could think of nothing that it was like but a nose. "We will follow it and find its owner, however," said they. So they traced it up, till at last they found their poor comrade, lying stretched along under the apple-tree.

What was to be done? They tried to carry him, but in vain. They caught an ass that was passing, and raised him upon its back; but it was soon tired of carrying such a load. So they sat down in despair, when before long up came their old friend the dwarf with the red jacket. "Why, how now, friend?" said he, laughing: "well, I must find a cure for you, I see." So he told them to gather a pear from another tree that grew close by, and the nose would come right again. No time was lost; and the nose was soon brought to its proper size to the poor soldier's joy.

"I will do something more for you yet," said the dwarf: "take some of those pears and apples with you; whoever eats one of the apples will have his nose grow like yours just now; but if you give him a pear, all will come right again. Go to the princess, and get her to eat some of your apples; her nose will grow twenty times as long as yours did: then look sharp, and you will get what you want from her."

Then they thanked their old friend very heartily for all his kindness; and it was agreed that the poor soldier, who had already tried the power of the apple, should undertake the task. So he dressed himself up as a gardener's boy, and went to the king's palace, and said he had apples to sell, so fine and so beautiful as were never seen there before. Every one that saw them was delighted, and wanted to taste; but he said they were only for the princess; and she soon sent her maid to buy

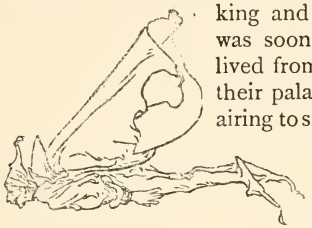
his stock. They were so ripe and rosy that she soon began eating; and had not eaten above a dozen before she too began to wonder what ailed her nose, for it grew and grew down to the ground, out at the window, and over the garden, and away, nobody knows where.

Then the king made known to all his kingdom that whoever would heal her of this dreadful disease should be richly rewarded. Many tried, but the princess got no relief. And now the old soldier dressed himself up very sprucely as a doctor, and said he could cure her. So he chopped up some of the apple, and, to punish her a little more, gave her a dose, saying he would call to-morrow and see her again. The morrow came, and, of course, instead of being better, the nose had been growing on all night as before; and the poor princess was in a dreadful fright. So the doctor then chopped up a very little of the pear and gave her, and said he was sure that would do good, and he would call again the next day. Next day came, and the nose was to be sure a little smaller, but yet it was bigger than when the doctor first began to meddle with it.

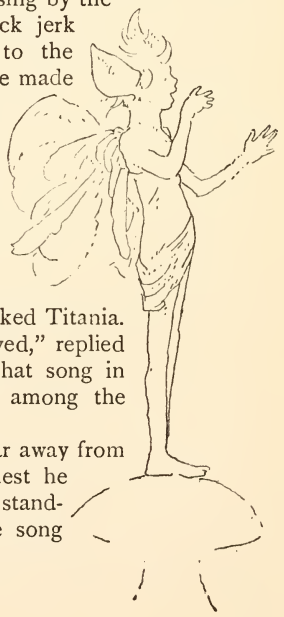
Then he thought to himself, "I must frighten this cunning princess a little more before I shall get what I want from her"; so he gave her another dose of the apple, and said he would call on the morrow. The morrow came, and the nose was ten times as bad as before. "My good lady," said the doctor, "something works against my medicine, and is too strong for it; but I know by the force of my art what it is; you have stolen goods about you, I am sure; and if you do not give them back, I can do nothing for you." But the princess denied very stoutly that she had anything of the kind. "Very well," said the doctor, "you may do as you please, but I am sure I am right, and you will die if you do not own it." Then he went to the king, and told him how the matter stood. "Daughter," said he, "send back the cloak, the purse, and the horn, that you stole from the right owners."

Then she ordered her maid to fetch all three, and gave them to the doctor, and begged him to give them back

to the soldiers; and the moment he had them safe he gave her a whole pear to eat, and the nose came right. And as for the doctor, he put on the cloak, wished the king and all his court a good day, and was soon with his two brothers; who lived from that time happily at home in their palace, except when they took an airing to see the world, in their coach with the three dapple-grey horses.



Puck's story made all laugh, and the more so because he artfully contrived a loud sneeze at the finish of it and set everybody thinking of what would have happened had the afflicted soldier or princess been given a pinch of snuff by some mischievous person passing by the ends of their noses. By a quick jerk forward Puck somersaulted on to the steps of Oberon's throne where he made a low bow to the fairy king and queen and then jumped to a thin branch of a shrub growing near where crossing his legs again in his favourite attitude he swung gently to and fro waiting for the next storyteller. Who was it to be?

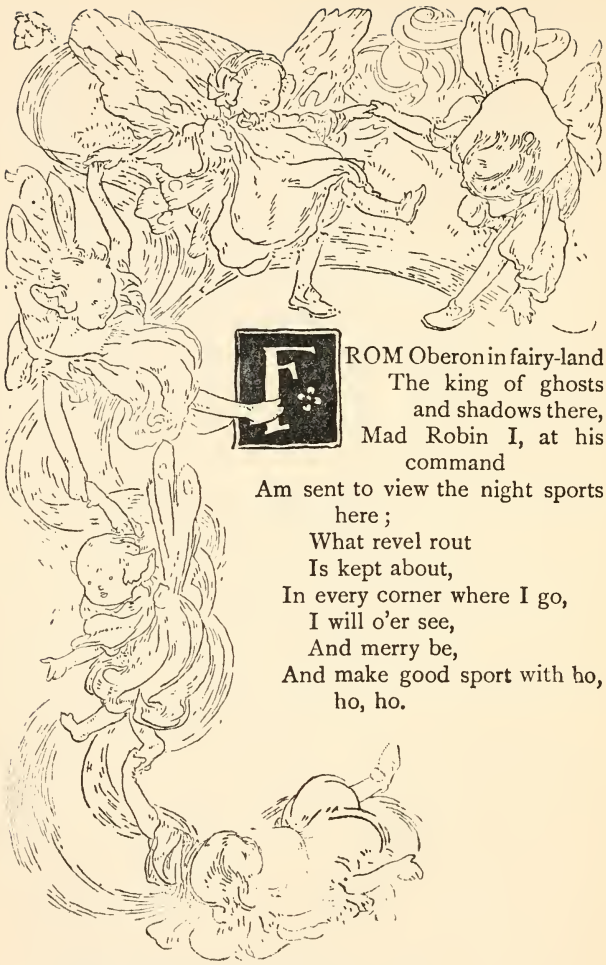


"Can we not have a song?" asked Titania.

"My queen speaks to be obeyed," replied Oberon; "Robin, let us hear that song in which you tell of your doings among the mortals."

Robin Goodfellow was never far away from the king, and at the royal request he promptly moved to the stool and standing up on it at once began the song that tells of


THE
PRANKS
OF
ROBIN GOODFELLOW



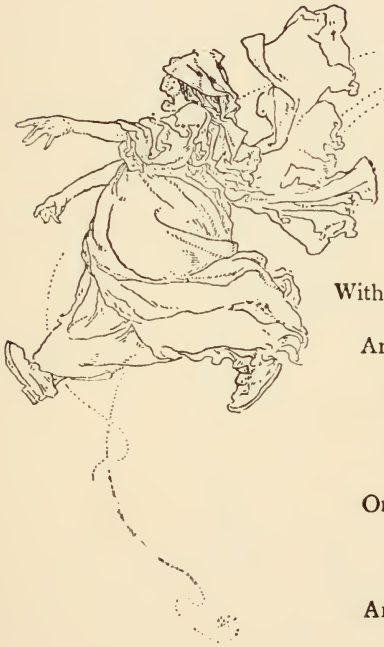
FROM Oberon in fairy-land
The king of ghosts and shadows there,
Mad Robin I, at his command
Am sent to view the night sports here;
What revel rout
Is kept about,
In every corner where I go,
I will o'er see,
And merry be,
And make good sport with ho, ho, ho.

More swift than lightning can I fly
About this airy welkin soon,
And, in a minute's space, descry
Each thing that's done below the moon:

The Pranks of Robin Goodfellow

There's not a hag
Or ghost shall wag,
Or cry, ware goblins, where I go;
But Robin I
Their feats will spy,
And send them home with ho, ho, ho.



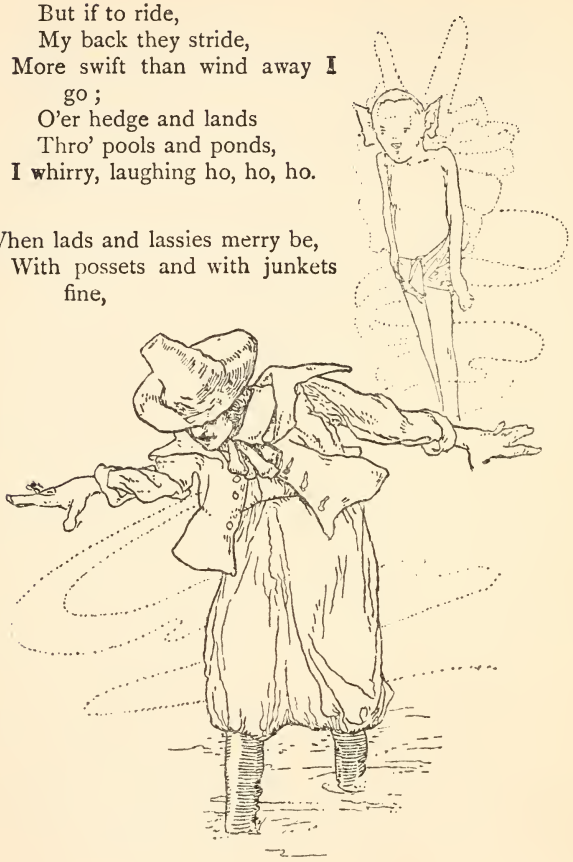


Whene'er such wanderers I meet,
As from their night-sports they trudge home,
With counterfeiting voice I greet
And call them on, with me to roam
Thro' woods, thro' lakes,
Thro' bogs, thro' brakes;
Or else, unseen, with them I go,
All in the nick
To play some trick
And frolic it with ho, ho, ho.

Sometimes I meet them like a man,
Sometimes an ox, sometimes a hound;
And to a horse I turn me can,
To trip and trot about them round

But if to ride,
My back they stride,
More swift than wind away I go;
O'er hedge and lands
Thro' pools and ponds,
I whirry, laughing ho, ho, ho.

When lads and lassies merry be,
With possets and with junkets fine,



Unseen of all the company,
I eat their cakes and sip their wine;
And to make sport,
I sneeze and snort,

And out the candles I do blow:
The maids I kiss;
They shriek—who's this?
I answer nought but ho, ho, ho.



Yet now and then, the maids to please,
At midnight I card up their wool;
And while they sleep and take their ease,
With wheel to threads their flax I pull.
I grind at mill
Their malt up still;
I dress their hemp, I spin their tow.
If any wake,
And would me take,
I wend me laughing ho, ho, ho!

The Pranks of Robin Goodfellow

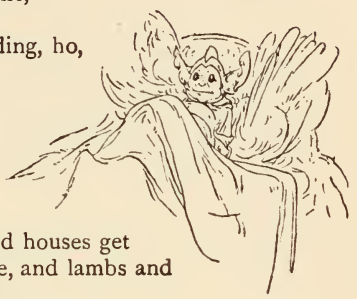
When house or hearth doth sluttish lie,
I pinch the maidens black and blue;
The bed clothes from the bed pull I,
And lay them naked all to view;
'Twixt sleep and wake
I do them take,
And on the key-cold floor them throw;
If out they cry
Then forth I fly
And loudly laugh I, ho, ho, ho!



When any need to borrow aught
We lend them what they do require,
And for the use demand we naught
Our own is all we do desire.
If to repay
They do delay
Abroad amongst them then I go
And night by night
I them affright
With pinchings, dreams, and ho, ho, ho!

When lazy queans have nought to do,
But study how to cog and lie;
To make debate and mischief too,
'Twixt one another secretly;

I mark their gloze,
And it disclose
To them whom they have wronged so;
When I have done,
I get me gone,
And leave them scolding, ho,
ho, ho!

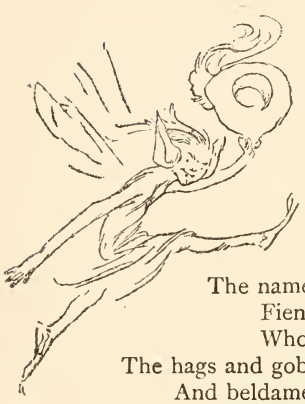


When men do traps
and engines set
In loop holes where
the vermin creep,
Who from their folds and houses get
Their ducks and geese, and lambs and
sheep,
I spy the gin,
And enter in,
And seem a vermin taken so;
But when they there
Approach me near,
I leap out laughing ho, ho, ho!

By wells and rills, in meadows green,
We nightly dance our hey-day guise;
And to our fairy King and Queen
We chant our moonlight minstrelsies.
When larks 'gin sing,
Away we fling,
And babes new born steal as we go,
And elf in bed
We leave instead
And wend us, laughing, ho, ho, ho!

Whereas my fellow-elves and I
In circled ring do trip around;
If that our sports by any eye
Do happen to be seen or found;

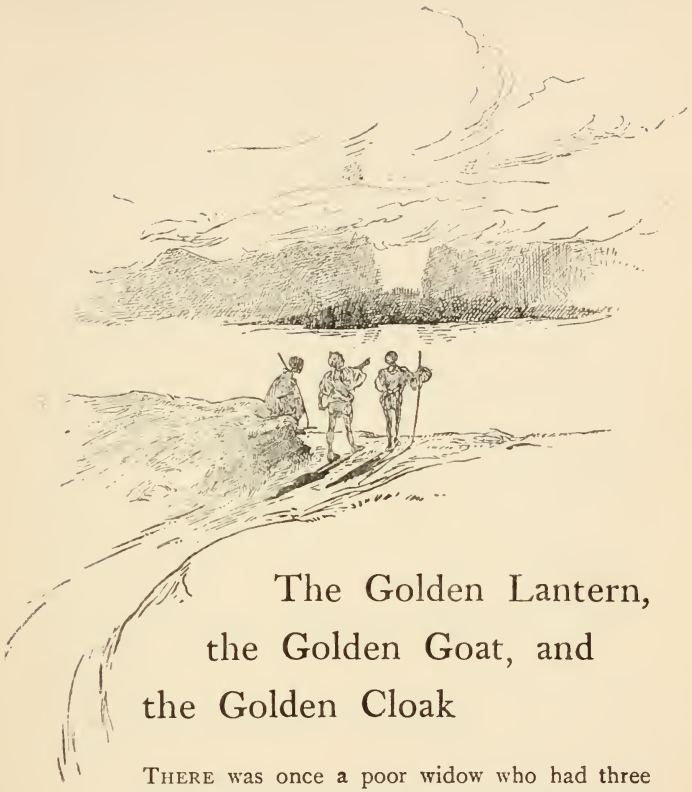
If that they
No words do say,
But *mum* continue as they go,
Each night I do
Put groat in shoe,
And wind out laughing,
ho, ho, ho!



From hag-bred Merlin's time
have I
Thus nightly revelled to
and fro;
And for my pranks men call
me by
The name of Robin Goodfellow.
Fiends, ghosts, and sprites
Who haunt the nights,
The hags and goblins do me know;
And beldames old
My feats have told,
So Vale, Vale, ho, ho, ho!

With the last line of his song Robin Goodfellow disappeared off the stool so quickly that even his fellow-fairies were unable to see where he went, and at one moment heard him singing his farewell "Vale, Vale," from the furthermost part of the fairy ring, and in the next instant, his laughing "ho, ho, ho!" came from the back of King Oberon's throne. The whole fairy realm took up this laughing "ho, ho, ho!" and when it quieted down, there on the stool was sitting a Swedish troll who, without any preface, began telling a story of





The Golden Lantern, the Golden Goat, and the Golden Cloak

THERE was once a poor widow who had three sons. The two elder went out to work for their living and while at home they were of little use, as they seldom did as their mother wished, whatever she might say to them. But the youngest lad always remained at home, and helped the old widow in her daily occupations. Hence he was much beloved by his mother, but disliked by his brothers, who in mockery gave him the nickname of *Pinkel*.

One day the old widow said to her sons: "You must now go abroad in the world, and seek your fortunes while you can. I am no longer able to feed you here at home,

now that you are grown up." The lads answered that they wished for nothing better, since it was contrary to their mother's will that they should remain at home. They then prepared for their departure, and set out on their journey; but, after wandering about from place to place, were unable to procure any employment.

After journeying thus for a long time, they came, late one evening, to a vast lake. Far out in the water there was an island, on which there appeared a strong light, as of fire. The lads stopped on shore observing the wondrous light, and thence concluded that there must be human beings in the place. As it was now dark, and the brothers knew not where to find a shelter for the night, they resolved on taking a boat that lay among the reeds, and rowing over to the island to beg a lodging. With this view they placed themselves in the boat and rowed across. On approaching the island they perceived a little hut standing at the water's edge; on reaching which they discovered that the bright light, that shone over the neighbourhood, proceeded from a golden lantern, that stood at the door of the hut. In the yard without, a large goat was wandering about, with golden horns, to which small bells were fastened, that gave forth a pleasing sound whenever the animal moved. The brothers wondered much at all this, but most of all at the old crone, who with her daughter inhabited the hut. The crone was both old and ugly, but was sumptuously clad in a pelisse or cloak, worked so artificially with golden threads that it glittered like burnished gold in every hem. The lads saw now very clearly that they had come to no ordinary human being, but to a Troll.

After some deliberation the brothers entered, and saw the crone standing by the fire-place, and stirring with a ladle in a large pot that was boiling on the hearth. They told their story and prayed to be allowed to pass the night there; but the crone answered *no*, at the same time directing them to a royal palace, which lay on the other side of the lake. While speaking she kept looking intently on the youngest boy, as he was standing and casting his eyes over everything in the hut. The crone said to him: "What is thy name, my boy?"

The lad answered smartly: "I am called Pinkel." The Troll then said: "Thy brothers can go their way, but thou shalt stay here; for thou appearest to me very crafty, and my mind tells me that I have no good to expect from thee, if thou shouldst stay long at the king's palace." Pinkel now humbly begged to be allowed to accompany his brothers, and promised never to cause the crone harm or annoyance. At length he also got leave to depart; after which the brothers hastened to the boat, not a little glad that all three had escaped so well in this adventure.

Towards the morning they arrived at a royal palace, larger and more magnificent than anything they had ever seen before. They entered and begged for employment. The eldest two were received as helpers in the royal stables, and the youngest was taken as page to the king's young son; and, being a sprightly intelligent lad, he soon won the goodwill of every one, and rose from day to day in the king's favour. At this his brothers were sorely nettled, not enduring that he should be preferred to themselves. At length they consulted together how they might compass the fall of their young brother, in the belief that afterwards they should prosper better than before.

They therefore presented themselves one day before the king, and gave him an exaggerated account of the beautiful lantern that shed light over both land and water, adding that it ill beseemed a king to lack so precious a jewel. On hearing this the king's attention was excited, and he asked: "Where is this lantern to be found, and who can procure it for me?" The brothers answered: "No one can do that unless it be our brother Pinkel. He knows best where the lantern is to be found." The king was now filled with desire to obtain the golden lantern, about which he had heard tell, and commanded the youth to be called. When Pinkel came, the king said: "If thou canst procure me the golden lantern, that shines over land and water, I will make thee the chief man in my whole court." The youth promised to do his best to execute his lord's behest, and the king praised him for his willingness; but the brothers rejoiced at heart; for they

well knew it was a perilous undertaking, which could hardly terminate favourably.

Pinkel now prepared a little boat, and, unaccompanied by any one, rowed over to the island inhabited by the Troll-crone. When he arrived it was already evening, and the crone was busied in boiling porridge for supper, as was her custom. The youth creeping softly up to the roof, cast from time to time a handful of salt through the chimney, so that it fell down into the pot that was boiling on the hearth. When the porridge was ready, and the crone had begun to eat, she could not conceive what had made it so salt and bitter. She was out of humour, and chided her daughter, thinking that she had put too much salt into the porridge; but let her dilute the porridge as she might, it could not be eaten, so salt and bitter was it. She then ordered her daughter to go to the well, that was just at the foot of the hill, and fetch water, in order to prepare fresh porridge. The maiden answered: "How can I go to the well? It is so dark out of doors, that I cannot find the way over the hill." "Then take my gold lantern," said the crone peevishly. The girl took the beautiful gold lantern accordingly, and hastened away to fetch the water. But as she stooped to lift the pail, Pinkel, who was on the watch, seized her by the feet, and cast her headlong into the water. He then took the golden lantern, and betook himself in all haste to his boat.

In the meantime the crone was wondering why her daughter stayed out so long, and, at the same moment, chancing to look through the window she saw the light gleaming far out on the water. At this sight she was sorely vexed, and, hurrying down to the shore, cried aloud: "Is that thou, Pinkel?" The youth answered: "Yes, dear mother, it is I." The Troll continued: "art thou not a great knave?" The lad answered: "Yes, dear mother, I am so." The crone now began to lament and complain, saying: "Ah! what a fool was I to let thee go from me; I might have been sure thou wouldst play me some trick. If thou ever comest hither again, thou shalt not escape." And so the matter rested for that time.

Pinkel now returned to the king's palace, and became the chief person at court, as the king had promised. But when the brothers were informed what complete success he had had in his adventure, they became yet more envious and embittered than before, and often consulted together how they might accomplish the fall of their young brother, and gain the king's favour for themselves.



Both brothers went, therefore, a second time before the king, and began relating at full length about the beautiful goat that had horns of the purest gold, from which little gold bells were suspended, which gave forth a pleasing sound, whenever the animal moved. They added, that it ill became so rich a king to lack so costly a treasure. On hearing their story, the king was greatly excited, and said: "Where is this goat to be found, and who can procure it for me?" The brothers answered: "That no one can do, unless it be our brother Pinkel; for he knows best where the goat is to be found." The king then felt a strong

desire to possess the goat with the golden horns, and therefore commanded the youth to appear before him. When Pinkel came, the king said: "Thy brothers have been telling me of a beautiful goat with horns of the purest gold, and little bells fastened to the horns, which ring whenever the animal moves. Now it is my will that thou go and procure for me this goat. If thou art successful I will make thee lord over a third part of my kingdom." The youth having listened to this speech, promised to execute his lord's commission, if only fortune would befriend him. The king then praised his readiness, and the brothers were glad at heart, believing that Pinkel would not escape this time so well as the first.

Pinkel now made the necessary preparations and rowed to the island where the Troll-wife dwelt. When he reached it, evening was already advanced, and it was dark, so that no one could be aware of his coming, the golden lantern being no longer there, but shedding its light in the royal palace. The youth now deliberated with himself how to get the golden goat; but the task was no easy one; for the animal lay every night in the crone's hut. At length it occurred to his mind that there was one method which might probably prove successful, though, nevertheless, sufficiently difficult to carry into effect.

At night, when it was time for the crone and her daughter to go to bed, the girl went as usual to bolt the door. But Pinkel was just outside on the watch, and had placed a piece of wood behind the door, so that it would not shut close. The girl stood for a long time trying to lock it but to no purpose. On perceiving this the crone thought there was something out of order, and called out, that the door might very well remain unlocked for the night; as soon as it was daylight they could ascertain what was wanting. The girl then left the door ajar and laid herself down to sleep. When the night was a little more advanced, and the crone and her daughter were snug in deep repose, the youth stole softly into the hut, and approached the goat where he lay stretched out on the hearth. Pinkel

now stuffed wool into all the golden bells, lest their sound might betray him; then seizing the goat, he bore it off to his boat. When he had reached the middle of the lake, he took the wool out of the goat's ears, and the animal moved so that the bells rang aloud. At the sound the crone awoke, ran down to the water, and cried in an angry tone: "Is that thou, Pinkel?" The youth answered· "Yes, dear mother, it is." The crone said: "Hast thou stolen my gold goat?" The youth answered: "Yes, dear mother, I have." The Troll continued: "Art thou not a big knave?" Pinkel returned for answer: "Yes, I am so, dear mother." Now the beldam began to whine and complain saying: "Ah! what a simpleton was I for letting thee slip away from me. I well knew thou wouldst play me some trick. But if thou comest hither ever again, thou shalt never go hence."

Pinkel now returned to the king's court and obtained the government of a third part of the kingdom, as the king had promised. But when the brothers heard how the enterprise had succeeded, and also saw the beautiful lantern and the goat with golden horns, which were regarded by every one as great wonders, they became still more hostile and embittered than ever. They could think of nothing but how they might accomplish his destruction.

They went, therefore, one day again before the king, to whom they gave a most elaborate description of the Troll-crone's fur cloak, that shone like the brightest gold, and was worked with golden threads in every seam. The brothers said, it was more befitting a queen than a Troll to possess such a treasure, and added that that alone was wanting to the king's good fortune. When the king heard all this he became very thoughtful, and said: "Where is this cloak to be found, and who can procure it for me?" The brothers answered: "No one can do that except our brother Pinkel; for he knows best where the gold cloak is to be found." The king was thereupon seized with an ardent longing to possess the gold cloak, and commanded the youth to be called before him. When Pinkel came, the

king said: "I have long been aware that thou hast an affection for my young daughter; and thy brothers have been telling me of a beautiful fur cloak, which shines with the reddest gold in every seam. It is, therefore, my will that thou go and procure for me this cloak. If thou art successful, thou shalt be my son-in-law, and after me shalt inherit the kingdom." When the youth heard this he was glad beyond measure, and promised either to win the young maiden, or perish in the attempt. The king thereupon praised his readiness; but the brothers were delighted in their false hearts, and trusted that that enterprise would prove their brother's destruction.

Pinkel then betook himself to his boat and crossed over to the island inhabited by the Troll-crone. On the way he anxiously deliberated with himself how he might get possession of the crone's gold cloak; but it appeared to him not very likely that his undertaking would prove successful, seeing that the Troll always wore the cloak upon her. So after having concerted divers plans, one more hazardous than another, it occurred to him, that he would try one method, which might perhaps succeed, although it was bold and rash.

In pursuance of his scheme he bound a bag under his clothes, and walked with trembling step and humble demeanour into the beldam's hut. On perceiving him, the Troll cast on him a savage glance, and said: "Pinkel, is that thou?" The youth answered: "Yes, dear mother, it is." The crone was overjoyed, and said: "Although thou art come voluntarily into my power, thou canst not surely hope to escape again from hence, after having played me so many tricks. She then took a large knife and prepared to make an end of poor Pinkel; but the youth, seeing her design, appeared sorely terrified, and said: "If I must needs die, I think I might be allowed to choose the manner of my death. I would rather eat myself to death with milk-porridge, than be killed with a knife." The crone thought to herself that the youth had made a bad choice, and therefore promised to comply with his



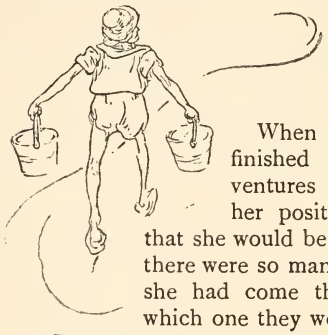
wish. She then set a huge pot on the fire, in which she put a large quantity of porridge. When the mess was ready, she placed it before Pinkel that he might eat, who for every spoonful of porridge that he put into his mouth, poured two into the bag that was tied under his clothes. At length the crone began to wonder how Pinkel could contrive to swallow such a quantity; but just at the same moment the youth, making a show of being sick to death, sank down from his seat as if he were dead, and unobserved cut a hole in the bag, so that the porridge ran over the floor.

The crone, thinking that Pinkel had burst with the quantity of porridge he had eaten, was not a little glad, clapped her hands together, and ran off to look for her daughter, who was gone to the well. But as the weather was wet and stormy, she first took off her beautiful fur cloak and laid it aside in the hut. Before she could have proceeded far, the youth came to life again, and springing up like lightning, seized on the golden cloak, and ran off at the top of his speed.

Shortly after, the crone perceived Pinkel as he was rowing in his little boat. On seeing him alive again, and observing the gold cloak glittering on the surface of the water, she was angry beyond all conception, and ran far out on the strand, crying: "Is that thou, Pinkel?" The youth answered: "Yes, it is I, dear mother." The crone said: "Hast thou taken my beautiful gold cloak?" Pinkel responded: "Yes, dear mother, I have." The Troll continued: "Art thou not a great knave?" The youth replied: "Yes, I am so, dear mother." The old witch was now almost beside herself, and began to whine and lament, and said: "Ah! how silly was it of me to let thee slip away. I was well assured thou wouldst play me many wicked tricks." They then parted from each other.

The Troll-wife now returned to her hut, and Pinkel crossed the water, and arrived safely at the king's palace; there he delivered the gold cloak, of which every one said that a more sumptuous garment was never seen nor heard

of. The king honourably kept his word with the youth, and gave him his young daughter to wife. Pinkel afterwards lived happy and content to the end of his days; but his brothers were and continued to be helpers in the stable as long as they lived.



When the Swedish Troll had finished the story of Pinkel's adventures a German Fairy took up her position on the stool and said that she would be very glad to tell a tale only there were so many in the country from which she had come that she really didn't know which one they would like best.

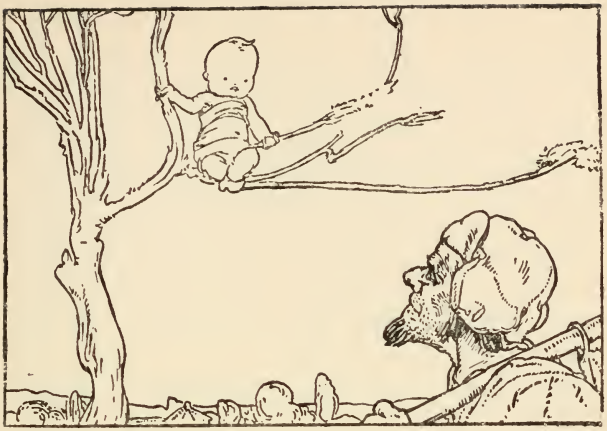
"Can we not have a story about children?" asked Queen Titania.

The German Fairy considered for a moment and then said that she did know a pretty story about children, a story which many children liked to hear and one which they called the Sweety-House, because it told how a little boy and girl when lost in the woods found a house built of nothing but sweets and cakes, and of the adventures which befel them afterwards when pursued by a bad wicked fairy who was a disgrace to the name.



"The Sweety-House, the Sweety-House," exclaimed Titania clapping her hands delightedly.

"The *proper* name of the story," said the German Fairy, "is



Hansel and Grethel

THERE was once a poor man, who was a woodman, and went every day to cut wood in the forest. Once as he went along, he heard a cry like a little child's: so he followed the sound, till at last he looked up a high tree, and on one of the branches sat a very little child. Now its mother had fallen asleep, and a vulture had taken it out of her lap and flown away with it, and left it on the tree. Then the woodcutter climbed up, took the little child down, and found it was a pretty little girl; and he said to himself, "I will take this poor child home, and bring her up with my own son Hansel." So he brought her to his cottage, and both grew up together: he called the little girl Grethel, and the two children were so very fond of each other that they were never happy but when they were together.

But the woodcutter became very poor, and had nothing in the world he could call his own; and indeed he had scarcely bread enough for his wife and the two children

to eat. At last the time came when even that was all gone, and he knew not where to seek for help in his need. Then at night, as he lay on his bed, and turned himself here and there, restless and full of care, his wife said to him, "Husband, listen to me, and take the two children out early to-morrow morning; give each of them a piece of bread, and then lead them into the midst of the wood, where it is thickest, make a fire for them, and go away and leave them alone to shift for themselves, for we can no longer keep them here." "No, wife," said the husband, "I cannot find it in my heart to leave the children to the wild beasts of the forest; they would soon tear them to pieces." "Well, if you will not do as I say," answered the wife, "we must all starve together." And she would not let him have any peace until he came into her hard-hearted plan.

Meantime the poor children too were lying awake restless, and weak from hunger, so that they heard all that Hansel's mother said to her husband. "Now," thought Grethel to herself, "it is all up with us": and she began to weep. But Hansel crept to her bedside, and said, "Do not be afraid, Grethel, I will find out some help for us." Then he got up, put on his jacket, and opened the door and went out.

The moon shone bright upon the little court before the cottage, and the white pebbles glittered like daisies on the green meadows. So he stooped down, and put as many as he could into his pocket, and then went back to the house. "Now, Grethel," said he, "rest in peace!" and he went to bed and fell fast asleep.

Early in the morning, before the sun had risen, the woodman's wife came and awoke them. "Get up, children," said she, "we are going into the wood; there is a piece of bread for each of you, but take care of it, and keep some for the afternoon." Grethel took the bread, and carried it in her apron, because Hansel had his pocket full of stones; and they made their way into the wood.

After they had walked on for a time, Hansel stood still and looked towards home; and after a while he turned again, and so on several times. Then his father said, "Hansel, why do you keep turning and lagging about so? move on a little faster." "Ah, father," answered Hansel, "I am stopping to look at my white cat, that sits on the roof, and wants to say good-bye to me." "You little fool!" said his mother, "that is not your cat; it is the morning sun shining on the chimney-top." Now Hansel had not been looking at the cat, but had all the while been lingering behind, to drop from his pocket one white pebble after another along the road.



When they came into the midst of the wood the woodman said, "Run about, children, and pick up some wood, and I will make a fire to keep us all warm." So they piled up a little heap of brushwood, and set it on fire; and as the flames burnt bright, the mother said, "Now set yourselves by the fire, and go to sleep, while we go and cut wood in the forest; be sure you wait till we come again and fetch you." Hansel and Grethel sat by the fireside till the afternoon, and then each of them ate their piece of bread. They fancied the woodman was still in the wood, because

they thought they heard the blows of his axe; but it was a bough, which he had cunningly hung upon a tree, in such a way that the wind blew it backwards and forwards against the other boughs: and so it sounded as the axe does in cutting. Thus they waited till evening: but the woodman and his wife kept away, and no one came to fetch them.

When it was quite dark Grethel began to cry; but then Hansel said, "Wait awhile till the moon rises." And when the moon rose he took her by the hand, and there lay the pebbles along the ground, glittering like new pieces of money, and marking out the way. Towards morning they came again to the woodman's house, and he was glad in his heart when he saw the children again, for he had grieved at leaving them alone. His wife also seemed to be glad; but in her heart she was angry at it.

Not long afterwards there was again no bread in the house, and Hansel and Grethel heard the wife say to her husband, "The children found their way back once, and I took it in good part; but now there is only half a loaf of bread left for them in the house; to-morrow you must take them deeper into the wood, that they may not find their way out, or we shall all be starved." It grieved the husband in his heart to do as his selfish wife wished, and he thought it would be better to share their last morsel with the children; but as he had done as she said once, he did not dare now to say no. When the children heard all their plan, Hansel got up, and wanted to pick up pebbles as before; but when he came to the door, he found his mother had locked it. Still he comforted Grethel, and said, "Sleep in peace, dear Grethel! God is very kind, and will help us."

Early in the morning, a piece of bread was given to each of them, but still smaller than the one they had before. Upon the road Hansel crumbled his in his pocket and often stood still, and threw a crumb upon the ground. "Why do you lag so behind, Hansel?" said the woodman; "go your ways on before." "I am looking at my little dove that is sitting upon the roof, and wants to say

good-bye to me." "You silly boy!" said the wife, "that is not your little dove; it is the morning sun, that shines on the chimney-top." But Hansel still went on crumbling his bread, and throwing it on the ground. And thus they went on still further into the wood, where they had never been before in all their life.

There they were again told to sit down by a large fire, and go to sleep; and the woodman and his wife said they would come in the evening and fetch them away. In the afternoon Hansel shared Grethel's bread, because he had strewed all his upon the road; but the day passed away, and evening passed away too, and no one came to the poor children. Still Hansel comforted Grethel, and said, "Wait till the moon rises; and then I shall be able to see the crumbs of bread which I have strewed, and they will show us the way home."

The moon rose; but when Hansel looked for the crumbs they were gone, for hundreds of little birds in the wood had found them and picked them up. Hansel, however, set out to try and find his way home; but they soon lost themselves in the wilderness, and went on through the night and all the next day, till at last they laid down and fell asleep for weariness. Another day they went on as before, but still did not come to the end of the wood; and they were as hungry as could be, for they had had nothing to eat.

In the afternoon of the third day they came to a strange little hut, made of bread, with a roof of cake, and windows of barley-sugar. "Now we will sit down and eat till we have had enough," said Hansel; "I will eat off the roof for my share; do you eat the windows, Grethel, they will be nice and sweet for you." Whilst Grethel, however, was picking at the barley-sugar, a pretty voice called softly from within,

"Tip, tap! who goes there?"

But the children answered,

"The wind, the wind,
That blows through the air!"

and went on eating. Now Grethel had broken out a round pane of the window for herself, and Hansel had torn off a large piece of cake from the roof, when the door opened, and a little old fairy came gliding out. At this Hansel and Grethel were so frightened, that they let fall what they had in their hands. But the old lady nodded to them, and said, "Dear children, where have you been wandering about? Come in with me; you shall have something good."

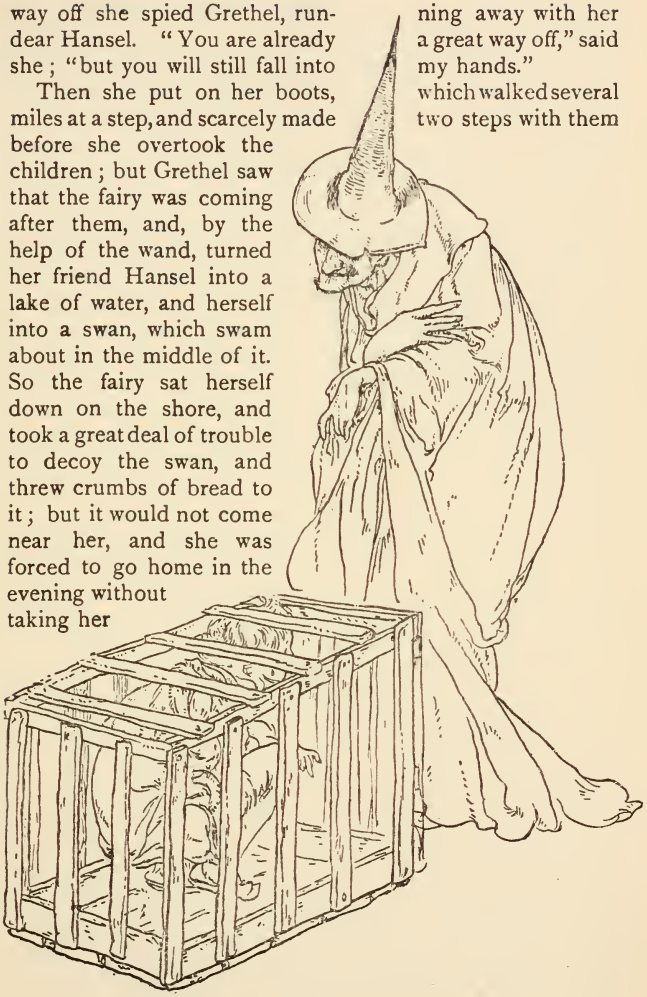
So she took them each by the hand, and led them into her little hut, and brought out plenty to eat,—milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples, and nuts; and then two beautiful little beds were got ready, and Grethel and Hansel laid themselves down, and thought they were in heaven. But the fairy was a spiteful one, and made her pretty sweetmeat house to entrap little children. Early in the morning, before they were awake, she went to their little beds; and though she saw the two sleeping and looking so sweetly, she had no pity on them, but was glad they were in her power. Then she took up Hansel, and fastened him up in a coop by himself, and when he awoke he found himself behind a grating, shut up safely, as chickens are; but she shook Grethel, and called out, "Get up, you lazy little thing, and fetch some water; and go into the kitchen, and cook something good to eat: your brother is shut up yonder; I shall first fatten him, and when he is fat, I think I shall eat him."

When the fairy was gone poor Grethel watched her time, and got up, and ran to Hansel, and told him what she had heard, and said, "We must run away quickly, for the old woman is a bad fairy, and will kill us." But Hansel said, "You must first steal away her fairy wand, that we may save ourselves if she should follow; and bring the pipe too that hangs up in her room." Then the little maiden ran back, and fetched the magic wand and the pipe, and away they went together; so when the old fairy came back and could see no one at home, she sprang in a great rage to the window, and looked out into the wide world (which she could do far and near), and a long



way off she spied Grethel, running away with her dear Hansel. "You are already a great way off," said she; "but you will still fall into my hands."

Then she put on her boots, which walked several miles at a step, and scarcely made two steps with them before she overtook the children; but Grethel saw that the fairy was coming after them, and, by the help of the wand, turned her friend Hansel into a lake of water, and herself into a swan, which swam about in the middle of it. So the fairy sat herself down on the shore, and took a great deal of trouble to decoy the swan, and threw crumbs of bread to it; but it would not come near her, and she was forced to go home in the evening without taking her



revenge. Then Grethel changed herself and Hansel back into their own forms once more, and they went journeying on the whole night, until the dawn of day: and then the maiden turned herself into a beautiful rose, that grew in the midst of a quickset hedge; and Hansel sat by the side.

The fairy soon came striding along. "Good piper," said she, "may I pluck yon beautiful rose for myself?" "O yes," answered he. "And then," thought he to himself, "I will play you a tune meantime." So when she had crept into the hedge in a great hurry, to gather the flower—for she well knew what it was,—he pulled out the pipe slily, and began to play. Now the pipe was a fairy pipe, and, whether they liked it or not, whoever heard it was obliged to dance. So the old fairy was forced to dance a merry jig, on and on without any rest, and without being able to reach the rose. And as he did not cease playing a moment, the thorns at length tore the clothes from off her body, and pricked her sorely, and there she stuck quite fast.

Then Grethel set herself free once more, and on they went; but she grew very tired, and Hansel said, "Now I will hasten home for help." And Grethel said, "I will stay here in the meantime, and wait for you." Then Hansel went away, and Grethel was to wait for him.

But when Grethel had stayed in the field a long time, and found he did not come back, she became quite sorrowful, and turned herself into a little daisy, and thought to herself, "Someone will come and tread me under foot, and so my sorrows will end." But it so happened that, as a shepherd was keeping watch in a field, he saw the daisy; and thinking it very pretty, he took it home, placed it in a box in his room, and said, "I have never found so pretty a daisy before." From that time everything throve wonderfully at the shepherd's house. When he got up in the morning, all the household work was ready done; the room was swept and cleaned, the fire made, and the water fetched; and in the afternoon, when he came home,

the table-cloth was laid, and a good dinner ready set for him. He could not make out how all this happened, for he saw no one in his house; and although it pleased him well enough, he was at length troubled to think how it could be, and went to a cunning woman who lived hard by, and asked her what he should do. She said, "There must be witchcraft in it; look out to-morrow morning early, and see if anything stirs about in the room: if it does, throw a white cloth at once over it, and then the witchcraft will be stopped." The shepherd did as she said, and the next morning saw the box open, and the daisy come out: then he sprang up quickly, and threw a white cloth over it: in an instant the spell was broken, and Grethel stood before him, for it was she who had taken care of his house for him; and she was so beautiful, that he asked her if she would marry him. She said, "No," because she wished to be faithful to her dear Hansel; but she agreed to stay, and keep house for him till Hansel came back.

Time passed on, and Hansel came back at last; for the spiteful fairy had led him astray, and he had not been able for a long time to find his way, either home or back to Grethel. Then he and Grethel set out to go home; but after travelling a long way, Grethel became tired, and she and Hansel laid themselves down to sleep in a fine old hollow tree that grew in a meadow by the side of the wood. But as they slept the fairy—who had got out of the bush at last—came by; and finding her wand was glad to lay hold of it, and at once turned poor Hansel into a fawn while he was asleep.

Soon after Grethel awoke, and found what had happened; and she wept bitterly over the poor creature; and the tears too rolled down his eyes, as he laid himself down beside her. Then she said, "Rest in peace, dear fawn; I will never, never leave thee." So she took off her golden necklace, and put it round his neck, and plucked some rushes, and plaited them into a soft string to fasten to it, and led the poor little thing by her side when

she went to walk in the wood; and when they were tired they came back, and laid down to sleep by the side of the hollow tree, where they lodged at night: but nobody came near them except the little dwarfs that lived in the wood, and these watched over them while they were asleep.

At last one day they came to a little cottage; and Grethel having looked in, and seen that it was quite empty, thought to herself, "We can stay and live here." Then she went and gathered leaves and moss to make a soft bed for the fawn; and every morning she went out and plucked nuts, roots, and berries for herself, and sweet shrubs and tender grass for her friend; and it ate out of her hand, and was pleased, and played and frisked about her. In the evening, when Grethel was tired, and had said her prayers, she laid her head upon the fawn for her pillow, and slept; and if poor Hansel could but have his right form again, she thought they should lead a very happy life.

They lived thus a long while in the wood by themselves, till it chanced that the king of that country came to hold a great hunt there. And when the fawn heard all around the echoing of the horns, and the baying of the dogs, and the merry shouts of the huntsmen, he wished very much to go and see what was going on. "Ah, sister! sister!" said he, "let me go out into the wood, I can stay no longer." And he begged so long, that she at last agreed to let him go. "But," said she, "be sure to come to me in the evening; I shall shut up the door, to keep out those wild huntsmen; and if you tap at it and say, 'Sister, let me in!' I shall know you; but if you don't speak, I shall keep the door fast." Then away sprang the fawn, and frisked and bounded along in the open air. The king and his huntsmen saw the beautiful creature, and followed, but could not overtake him; for when they thought they were sure of their prize, he sprang over the bushes, and was out of sight at once.

As it grew dark he came running home to the hut and tapped, and said, "Sister, sister, let me in!" Then she

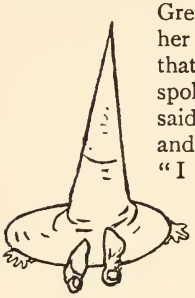
opened the little door, and in he jumped, and slept soundly all night on his soft bed.

Next morning the hunt began again; and when he heard the huntsmen's horns, he said, "Sister, open the door for me, I must go again." Then she let him out, and said, "Come back in the evening, and remember what you are to say." When the king and the huntsmen saw the fawn with the golden collar again, they gave him chase; but he was too quick for them. The chase lasted the whole day; but at last the huntsmen nearly surrounded him, and one of them wounded him in the foot, so that he became sadly lame, and could hardly crawl home. The man who had wounded him followed close behind, and hid himself, and heard the little fawn say, "Sister, sister, let me in!" upon which the door opened, and soon shut again. The huntsman marked all well, and went to the king and told him what he had seen and heard; then the king said, "To-morrow we will have another chase."

Grethel was very much frightened when she saw that her dear little fawn was wounded; but she washed the blood away, and put some healing herbs on it, and said, "Now go to bed, dear fawn, and you will soon be well again." The wound was so slight, that in the morning there was nothing to be seen of it; and when the horn blew, the little thing said, "I can't stay here, I must go and look on; I will take care that none of them shall catch me." But Grethel said, "I am sure they will kill you this time: I will not let you go." "I shall die of grief," said he, "if you keep me here; when I hear the horns, I feel as if I could fly." Then Grethel was forced to let him go: so she opened the door with a heavy heart, and he bounded out gaily into the wood.

When the king saw him, he said to his huntsmen, "Now chase him all day long, till you catch him; but let none of you do him any harm." The sun set, however, without their being able to overtake him, and the king called away the huntsmen, and said to the one who had watched, "Now come and show me the little hut." So they went to the

door and tapped, and said, "Sister, sister, let me in!" Then the door opened, and the king went in, and there stood a maiden more lovely than any he had ever seen.



Grethel was frightened to see that it was not her fawn, but a king with a golden crown that was come into her hut: however, he spoke kindly to her, and took her hand, and said, "Will you come with me to my castle, and be my wife?" "Yes," said the maiden, "I will go to your castle, but I cannot be your wife; and my fawn must go with me, I cannot part with that." "Well," said the king, "he shall come and live with you all your life, and want for nothing." Just then in sprang the little fawn; and his sister tied the string to his neck, and they left the hut in the wood together.

Then the king took Grethel to his palace, and on the way she told him all her story: and then he sent for the fairy, and made her change the fawn into Hansel again; and he and Grethel loved one another, and were married, and lived happily together all their days in the good king's palace.

The story of Hansel and Grethel was liked as well as any one that could be told and the German Fairy was very proud of this, so much so that she began to declare that the part of the world which she came from was one far richer than any other in such stories, and implied that she was quite ready to tell them all if King Oberon liked, but the king did not take the hint but instead thanked the German Fairy, and at once began to look around for the next tale-teller when Puck came flying up and in a privileged fashion whispered in the ear of the Fairy King.

"Capital," exclaimed Oberon, "Bottom and his friends must know some stories and one of them shall be next."

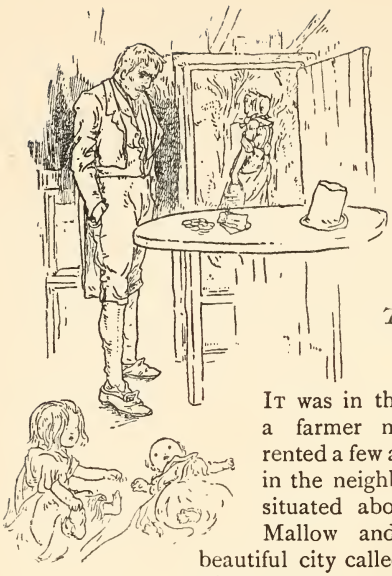
Off Puck went, and then there was such a shuffling of feet and nudging of elbows where Nick Bottom the weaver

sat with Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout and Starveling, his companions.

"You first, bully Bottom," says Snout, and "You first, Peter Quince," says Nick Bottom, and "You first, Robin Starveling," "You first, Flute," comes from the others.

Puck would not wait for the dispute as to precedence to be settled but just laid hold of Robin Starveling the tailor by the ear and willy-nilly off he had to go. On getting to the stool, like a sensible fellow, he began at once without any excuses by telling another story of the Irish fairies, and his story was called





The Magic Bottles

It was in the good old days that a farmer named Mick Purcell rented a few acres of barren ground in the neighbourhood of Mouren, situated about three miles from Mallow and thirteen from the beautiful city called Cork. Mick had a wife and family. They all did what they could, and that was but little, for the poor man had no child grown up big enough to help him in his work; and all the poor woman could do was to mind the children, and to milk the one cow, and to boil the potatoes and carry the eggs to market to Mallow; but with all they could do 'twas hard enough on them to pay the rent. Well, they did manage it for a good while; but at last came a bad year, and the little grain of oats was all spoiled, and the chickens died of the pip, and the pig got the measles—she was sold in Mallow and brought almost nothing; and poor Mick found that he hadn't enough half to pay his rent.

"Why, then, Molly," says he, "what'll we do?"

"Wisha, then, mavourneen, what would you do but take the cow to the fair of Cork and sell her?" says she; "and so you must go to-morrow, that the poor beast may be rested *again* the fair."

"And what'll we do when she's gone?" says Mick sorrowfully.

"Never a know I know, Mick; but sure God won't leave us without him, Mick; and you know how good he was to us when poor little Billy was sick, and we had nothing at all for him to take—that good doctor gentleman at Ballydahin came riding and asking for a drink of milk; and how he gave us two shillings; and how he sent the things and bottles for the child and gave me my breakfast when I went over to ask a question, so he did; and how he came to see Billy, and never left off his goodness till he was quite well?"

"Oh! you are always that way, Molly, and I believe you are right after all, so I won't be sorry for selling the cow; but I'll go to-morrow, and you must put a needle and thread through my coat, for you know 'tis ripped under the arm."

Molly told him he should have everything right; and about twelve o'clock next day he left her, getting a charge not to sell his cow except for the highest penny. Mick promised to mind it, and went his way along the road. He drove his cow slowly through the little stream which crosses it, and runs under the old walls of Mourne. As he passed he glanced his eye upon the towers and one of the old elder trees, which were then only little bits of switches.

"Oh, then, if I only had half the money that's buried in you, 'tisn't driving this poor cow I'd be now! Why, then, isn't it too bad that it should be there covered over with earth, and many a one besides me wanting? Well, if it's God's will, I'll have some money myself coming back."

So saying he moved on after his beast. 'Twas a fine day, and the sun shone brightly on the walls of the old abbey as he passed under them. He then crossed an extensive mountain tract and after six long miles he came to the top of that hill—Bottle Hill 'tis called now, but that was not the name of it then, and just there a man overtook him. "Good morrow," says he. "Good morrow, kindly," says Mick, looking at the stranger, who was a little man, you'd almost call him a dwarf, only he wasn't quite so little neither: he had a bit of an old wrinkled, yellow face, for all the world like a dried cauliflower only he had a sharp

little nose, and red eyes, and white hair, and his lips were not red, but all his face was one colour, and his eyes were never quite still but looking at everything and although they were red they made Mick feel quite cold when he looked at them. In truth he did not much like the little man's company ; and he couldn't see one bit of his legs nor his body, for though the day was warm, he was all wrapped up in a big great-coat. Mick drove his cow something faster, but the little man kept up with him. Mick didn't know how he walked for he was almost afraid to look at him, and to cross himself, for fear the old man would be angry. Yet he thought his fellow-traveller did not seem to walk like other men, nor to put one foot before the other, but to glide over the rough road—and rough enough it was —like a shadow, without noise and without effort. Mick's heart trembled within him, and he said a prayer to himself, wishing he hadn't come out that day, or that he was on Fair-hill, or that he hadn't the cow to mind that he might run away from the bad thing—when, in the midst of his fears, he was again addressed by his companion.

"Where are you going with the cow, honest man?"

"To the fair of Cork then," says Mick, trembling at the shrill and piercing tones of the voice.

"Are you going to sell her?" said the stranger.

"Why, then, what else am I going for but to sell her?"

"Will you sell her to me?"

Mick started—he was afraid to have anything to do with the little man, and he was more afraid to say no.

"What'll you give for her?" at last says he.

"I'll tell you what, I'll give you this bottle," said the little one, pulling a bottle from under his coat.

Mick looked at him and the bottle, and, in spite of his terror, he could not help bursting into a loud fit of laughter.

"Laugh if you will," said the little man, "but I tell you this bottle is better for you than all the money you will get for the cow in Cork—ay, than ten thousand times as much."

Mick laughed again. "Why then," says he, "do you think I am such a fool as to give my good cow for a bottle —and an empty one, too? indeed, then I won't."

"You'd better give me the cow, and take the bottle— you'll not be sorry for it."

"Why, then, and what would Molly say? I'd never hear the end of it; and how would I pay the rent? and what would we all do without a penny of money?"

"I tell you this bottle is better to you than money; take it and give me the cow. I ask you for the last time, Mick Purcell."

Mick started.

"How does he know my name?" thought he.

The stranger proceeded: "Mick Purcell, I know you, and I have a regard for you; therefore do as I warn you, or you may be sorry for it. How do you know but your cow will die before you go to Cork?"

Mick was going to say "God forbid!" but the little man went on (and he was too attentive to say anything to stop him; for Mick was a very civil man, and he knew better than to interrupt a gentleman, and that's what many people, that hold their heads higher, don't mind now).

"And how do you know but there will be much cattle at the fair, and you will get a bad price, or maybe you might be robbed when you are coming home? but what need I talk more to you, when you are determined to throw away your luck, Mick Purcell."

"Oh! no, I would not throw away my luck, sir," said Mick, "and if I was sure the bottle was as good as you say, though I never liked an empty bottle, although I had drank the contents of it, I'd give you the cow in the name——"

"Never mind names," said the stranger, "but give me the cow; I would not tell you a lie. Here, take the bottle, and when you go home do what I direct exactly."

Mick hesitated.

"Well, then, good-bye, I can stay no longer: once more take it, and be rich; refuse it, and beg for your life, and

see your children in poverty, and your wife dying for want —that will happen to you, Mick Purcell!" said the little man with a malicious grin, which made him look ten times more ugly than ever.



"Maybe, 'tis true," said Mick, still hesitating: he did not know what to do—he could hardly help believing the old man, and at length in a fit of desperation, he seized the bottle. "Take the cow," said he, "and if you are telling a lie, the curse of the poor will be on you."

"I care neither for your curses nor your blessings; but I have spoken truth, Mick Purcell, and that you will find to-night, if you do what I tell you."

"And what's that?" says Mick.

"When you go home, never mind if your wife is angry, but be quiet yourself, and make her sweep the room clean, set the table out right and spread a clean cloth over it; then put the bottle on the ground saying these words: 'Bottle, do your duty,' and you will see the end of it."



"And is this all?" says Mick.

"No more," said the stranger. "Good-bye, Mick Purcell—you are a rich man."

"God grant it!" said Mick, as the old man moved after the cow, and Mick retraced the road towards his cabin; but he could not help turning back his head, to look after the purchaser of his cow, who was nowhere to be seen.

"Lord between us and harm!" said Mick. "*He* can't belong to this earth; but where is the cow?" She, too, was gone, and Mick went homeward muttering prayers, and holding fast the bottle.

"And what would I do if it broke?" thought he. "Oh! but I'll take care of that." So he put it into his bosom, and went on anxious to prove his bottle, and doubting of the reception he should meet from his wife. Balancing his anxieties with his expectation, his fears with his hopes, he reached home in the evening and

surprised his wife, sitting over the turf fire in the big chimney.

"Oh! Mick, are you come back? Sure you weren't at Cork all the way! What has happened to you? Where is the cow? Did you sell her? How much money did you get for her? What news have you? Tell us everything about it."

"Why then, Molly, if you'll give me time, I'll tell you all about it. If you want to know where the cow is, 'tisn't Mick can tell you, for the never a know does he know where she is now."

"Oh! then, you sold her; and where's the money?"

"Arrah, stop awhile, Molly, and I'll tell you all about it."

"But what is that bottle under your waistcoat?" said Molly, spying its neck sticking out.

"Why, then, be easy now, can't you," says Mick, "till I tell it to you." Then, putting the bottle on the table, "That's all I got for the cow."

His poor wife was thunderstruck. "All you got! and what good is that, Mick? Oh! I never thought you were such a fool; and what'll we do for the rent, and what——"

"Now, Molly," says Mick, "can't you hearken to reason? Didn't I tell you how the old man, or whatsoever he was, met me—no, he did not meet me, neither, but he was there with me—on the big hill and how he made me sell him the cow, and told me the bottle was the only thing for me?"

"Yes, indeed, the only thing for you, you fool!" said Molly seizing the bottle to hurl it at her poor husband's head; but Mick caught it, and quickly (for he minded the old man's advice) loosened his wife's grasp, and placed the bottle again in his bosom. Poor Molly sat down crying, while Mick told her his story, with many a crossing and blessing between him and harm. His wife could not help believing him, particularly as she had as much faith in fairies as she had in the priest, who indeed never discouraged her belief in the fairies; maybe he didn't know

she believed in them, and maybe he believed in them himself. She got up, however, without saying one word, and began to sweep the earthen floor with a bunch of heath; then she tidied up everything, and put out the long table, and spread the clean cloth, for she had only one, upon it, and Mick, placing the bottle on the ground, looked at it and said, "Bottle, do your duty."

"Look there! look there, mammy!" said his chubby eldest son, a boy about five years old—"look there! look there!" and he sprung to his mother's side, as two tiny little fellows rose like light from the bottle, and in an instant covered the table with dishes and plates of gold and silver, full of the finest victuals that ever were seen, and when all was done went into the bottle again. Mick and his wife looked at everything with astonishment; they had never seen such plates and dishes before, and didn't think they could ever admire them enough, the very sight almost took away their appetites; but at length Molly said, "Come and sit down, Mick, and try and eat a bit: sure you ought to be hungry after such a good day's work."

"Why, then, the man told no lie about the bottle."

Mick sat down, after putting the children to the table and they made a hearty meal, though they couldn't taste half the dishes.

"Now," says Molly, "I wonder will those two good little gentlemen carry away these fine things again?" They waited, but no one came; so Molly put up the dishes and plates very carefully saying, "Why, then, Mick, that was no lie sure enough: but you'll be a rich man yet, Mick Purcell."

Mick and his wife and children went to their bed, not to sleep, but to settle about selling the fine things they did not want and taking more land. Mick went to Cork and sold his plate, and bought a horse and cart, and began to show that he was making money; and they did all they could to keep the bottle a secret; but for all that, their landlord found it out, for he came to Mick one day and asked him where he got all his money—sure it was not by the farm;

and he bothered him so much, that at last Mick told him of the bottle. His landlord offered him a deal of money for it, but Mick would not give it, till at last he offered to give him all his farm for ever: so Mick, who was very rich, thought he'd never want any more money, and gave him the bottle: but Mick was mistaken—he and his family spent money as if there was no end of it; and to make the story short, they became poorer and poorer, till at last they had nothing left but one cow; and Mick once more drove his cow before him to sell her at Cork fair, hoping to meet the old man and get another bottle. It was hardly daybreak when he left home, and he walked on at a good pace till he reached the big hill: the mists were sleeping in the valleys and curling like smoke wreaths upon the brown heath around him. The sun rose on his left, and just at his feet a lark sprang from its grassy couch and poured forth its joyous matin song, ascending into the clear blue sky.

Mick crossed himself listening as he advanced to the sweet song of the lark, but thinking, notwithstanding, all the time of the little old man; when, just as he reached the summit of the hill, and cast his eyes over the extensive prospect before and around him, he was startled and rejoiced by the same well-known voice: "Well, Mick Purcell, I told you you would be a rich man."

"Indeed, then, sure enough I was, that's no lie for you, sir. Good morning to you, but it is not rich I am now—but have you another bottle, for I want it now as much as I did long ago; so if you have it, sir, here is the cow for it."

"And here is the bottle," said the old man, smiling; "you know what to do with it."

"Oh! then, sure I do, as good right I have."

"Well, farewell for ever, Mick Purcell: I told you you would be a rich man."

"And good-bye to you, sir," said Mick, as he turned back; "and good luck to you, and good luck to the big hill—it wants a name—Bottle Hill—good-bye, sir, good-bye."

Mick walked home as fast as he could, never looking

after the white-faced little gentleman and the cow, so anxious was he to bring home the bottle. Well, he arrived with it safely enough, and called out as soon as he saw Molly—"Oh! sure I've another bottle!"

"Arrah! then, have you? why, then, you're a lucky man, Mick Purcell, that's what you are."

In an instant she put everything right; and Mick, looking at his bottle, exultingly cried out, "Bottle, do your duty." In a twinkling, two great stout men with big cudgels issued from the bottle (I do not know how they got room in it) and belaboured poor Mick and his wife and all his family, till they lay on the floor, when in they went again. Mick, as soon as he recovered, got up and looked about him; he thought and thought, and at last he took up his wife and his children; and, leaving them to recover as well as they could, he took the bottle under his coat and went to his landlord, who had a great company: he got a servant to tell him he wanted to speak to him, and at last he came out to Mick.

"Well, what do you want now?"

"Nothing, sir, only I have another bottle."

"Oh! ho! is it as good as the first?"

"Yes, sir, and better; if you like, I will show it to you before all the ladies and gentlemen."

"Come along, then." So saying Mick was brought into the great hall, where he saw his old bottle standing high up on a shelf. "Ah! ha!" says he to himself, "maybe I won't have you by-and-by."

"Now," says his landlord, "show us your bottle." Mick set it on the floor, and uttered the words: in a moment the landlord was tumbled on the floor; ladies and gentlemen, servants and all, were running, and roaring, and sprawling, and kicking, and shrieking. Wine cups and salvers were knocked about in every direction, until the landlord called out, "Stop those two devils, Mick Purcell, or I'll have you hanged."

"They never shall stop," said Mick, "till I get my own bottle that I see up there at top of that shelf."

"Get it down to him, give it down to him, before we are all killed!" says the landlord.

Mick put his bottle in his bosom: in jumped the two men into the new bottle, and he carried them home. I need not lengthen my story by telling how they got richer than ever; how his son married his landlord's only daughter, how he and his wife died when they were very old, and how some of the servants fighting at their wake, broke the bottles; but still the hill has the name upon it; ay, and so 'twill be always Bottle Hill to the end of the world, and so it ought, for it is a strange story.



Some of the fairies did not think the story so strange as Starveling the tailor did, but then they were accustomed to wonderful things. While he was making his way back to his friends (with Puck keeping close watch upon him the while) the King had already fixed upon the next tale-teller, and a French Fay—a brilliant delicate little creature with transparent gauzy wings coloured like the rainbow—was standing on the stool and had begun to tell the story of the





Princess Rosette

Once upon a time there lived a King and Queen who had two handsome boys; so well-fed and hearty were they, that they grew like the day.

Whenever the Queen had a child, she sent for the fairies, that she might learn from them what would be its future lot. After a while she had a little daughter, who was so beautiful, that no one could see her without loving her. The fairies came as usual, and the Queen having feasted them, said to them as they were going away, "Do not forget that good custom of yours, but tell me what will happen to Rosette"—for this was the name of the little Princess. The fairies answered her that they had left their divining-books at home, and that they would come again to see her. "Ah!" said the Queen, "that bodes no good, I fear; you do not wish to distress me by foretelling evil; but, I pray you, let me know the worst, and hide nothing from me." The fairies continued to make excuses, but the Queen only became more anxious to know the truth. At last the chief among them said to her, "We fear, madam, that Rosette will be the cause of a great misfortune befalling

her brothers; that they may even lose their lives on her account. This is all that we can tell you of the fate of this sweet little Princess, and we are grieved to have nothing better to say about her." The fairies took their departure, and the Queen was very sorrowful, so sorrowful that the King saw by her face that she was in trouble. He asked her what was the matter. She told him she had gone too near the fire and accidentally burnt all the flax that was on her distaff. "Is that all?" replied the King, and he went up to his store-room and brought her down more flax than she could spin in a hundred years.

But the Queen was still very sorrowful, and the King again asked her what was the matter. She told him that she had been down to the river and had let one of her green satin slippers fall into the water. "Is that all?" replied the King, and he sent for all the shoemakers in the kingdom, and made the Queen a present of ten thousand green satin slippers.

Still the Queen was no less sorrowful; and the King asked her once more what was the matter. She told him that, being hungry, she had eaten hastily, and had swallowed her wedding-ring. The King knew that she was not speaking the truth, for he had himself put away the ring, and he replied, "My dear wife, you are not speaking the truth; here is your ring, which I have kept in my purse." The Queen was put out of countenance at being caught telling a lie—for there is nothing in the world so ugly—and she saw that the King was vexed, so she told him what the fairies had predicted about little Rosette, and begged him to tell her if he could think of any remedy. The King was greatly troubled, so much so, that at last he said to the Queen, "I see no way of saving our two boys, except by putting the little girl to death, while she is still in her swaddling clothes." But the Queen cried that she would rather suffer death herself, that she would never consent to so cruel a deed, and that the King must try and think of some other remedy. The King and Queen could think of nothing else, and while

thus pondering over the matter, the Queen was told that in a large wood near the town, there lived an old hermit, who made his home in the trunk of a tree, whom people went from far and near to consult.

"It is to him I must go," said the Queen; "the fairies told me the evil, but they forgot to tell me the remedy."

She started early in the morning, mounted on her little white mule, that was shod with gold, and accompanied by two of her maids of honour, who each rode a pretty horse. When they were near the wood they dismounted out of respect, and made their way to the tree where the hermit lived. He did not much care for the visits of women, but when he saw that it was the Queen approaching, he said, "Welcome! what would you ask of me?" She related to him what the fairies had said about Rosette, and asked him to advise her what to do. He told her that the Princess must be shut up in a tower, and not be allowed to leave it as long as she lived. The Queen thanked him, and returned and told everything to the King. The King immediately gave orders for a large tower to be built as quickly as possible. In it he placed his daughter, but that she might not feel lonely and depressed, he, and the Queen, and her two brothers, went to see her every day. The elder of these was called the big Prince, and the younger, the little Prince. They loved their sister passionately, for she was the most beautiful and graceful Princess ever seen, and the least glance of hers was worth more than a hundred gold pieces. When she was fifteen years old, the big Prince said to the King, "Father, my sister is old enough to be married; shall we not soon have a wedding?" The little Prince said the same to the Queen, but their Majesties laughed and changed the subject, and made no answer about the marriage.

Now, it happened that the King and Queen both fell very ill, and died within a few days of one another. There was great mourning; everyone wore black, and all the bells were tolled. Rosette was inconsolable at the loss of her good mother.

As soon as the funeral was over, the dukes and marquises of the kingdom placed the big Prince on a throne made of gold and diamonds; he wore a splendid crown on his head, and robes of violet velvet embroidered with suns and moons. Then the whole Court cried out, "Long live the King!" and now on all sides there was nothing but rejoicing.

Then the young King and his brother said, "Now that we are the masters, we will release our sister from the tower, where she has been shut up for such a long and dreary time." They had only to pass through the garden to reach the tower, which stood in one corner of it, and had been built as high as was possible, for the late Queen had intended her to remain there always. Rosette was embroidering a beautiful dress on a frame in front of her, when she saw her brothers enter. She rose, and taking the King's hand, said, "Good-day, sire, you are now King, and I am your humble subject; I pray you to release me from this tower, where I lead a melancholy life," and with this, she burst into tears. The King embraced her, and begged her not to weep, for he was come, he said, to take her from the tower, and to conduct her to a beautiful castle. The Prince had his pockets full of sweetmeats, which he gave Rosette. "Come," he said, "let us get away from this wretched place; the King will soon find you a husband; do not be unhappy any longer."

When Rosette saw the beautiful garden, full of flowers, and fruits, and fountains, she was so overcome with astonishment, that she stood speechless, for she had never seen anything of the kind before. She looked around her, she went first here, then there, she picked the fruit off the trees, and gathered flowers from the beds; while her little dog, Fretillon, who was as green as a parrot, kept on running before her, saying, yap, yap, yap! and jumping and cutting a thousand capers, and everybody was amused at his ways. Presently he ran into a little wood, whither the Princess followed him, and here her wonder was even greater than before, when she saw

a large peacock spreading out its tail. She thought it so beautiful, so very beautiful, that she could not take her eyes off it. The King and the Prince now joined her, and asked her what delighted her so much. She pointed to the peacock, and asked them what it was. They told her it was a bird, which was sometimes eaten. "What!" she cried, "dare to kill and eat a beautiful bird like that I tell you, that I will marry no one but the King of the Peacocks, and when I am their Queen I shall not allow anybody to eat them." The astonishment of the King cannot be described. "But, dear sister," said he, "where would you have us go to find the King of the Peacocks?" "Whither you please, sire; but him, and him alone, will I marry."

Having come to this decision, she was now conducted by her brothers to their castle; the peacock had to be brought and put into her room, so fond was she of it. All the Court ladies who had not before seen Rosette now hastened to greet her, and pay their respects to her. Some brought preserves with them, some sugar, and others dresses of woven gold, beautiful ribbons, dolls, embroidered shoes, pearls, and diamonds. Everyone did their best to entertain her, and she was so well brought up, so courteous, kissing their hands, curtseying when anything beautiful was given to her, that there was not a lord or lady who did not leave her presence gratified and charmed. While she was thus occupied, the King and the Prince were turning over in their minds how they should find the King of the Peacocks, if there was such a person in the world to be found. They decided that they would have Rosette's portrait painted; and when completed it was so life-like, that only speech was wanting. Then they said to her, "Since you will marry no one but the King of the Peacocks, we are going together to look for him, and will traverse the whole world to try and find him for you. If we find him, we shall be very glad. Meanwhile take care of our kingdom until we return."

Rosette thanked them for all the trouble they were taking; she promised to govern the kingdom well, and said that, during their absence, her only pleasure would be in looking at the peacock, and making her little dog dance. They all three cried when they said good-bye to each other.

So the two Princes started on their long journey, and they asked everyone whom they met, "Do you know the King of the Peacocks?" but the reply was always the same, "No, we do not." Each time they passed on and went further, and in this way they travelled so very, very far, that no one had ever been so far before.

They came to the kingdom of the cock-chafers; and these were in such numbers, and made such a loud buzzing, that the King feared he should become deaf. He asked one of them, who appeared to him to have the most intelligence, whether he knew where the King of the Peacocks was to be found. "Sire," replied the cock-chafer, "his kingdom lies thirty thousand leagues from here; you have chosen the longest way to reach it." "And how do you know that?" asked the King. "Because," answered the cock-chafer, "we know you very well, for every year we spend two or three months in your gardens." Whereupon the King and his brother embraced the cock-chafer, and they went off arm in arm to dine together, and the two strangers admired all the curiosities of that new country, where the smallest leaf of a tree was worth a gold piece. After that, they continued their journey, and having been directed along the right way, they were not long in reaching its close. On their arrival, they found all the trees laden with peacocks, and, indeed, there were peacocks everywhere, so that they could be heard talking and screaming two leagues off.

The King said to his brother, "If the King of the Peacocks is a peacock himself, how can our sister marry him? it would be folly to consent to such a thing, and it would be a fine thing for us to have little peacocks for nephews." The Prince was equally disturbed at the

thought. "It is an unhappy fancy she has taken into her head," he said. "I cannot think what led her to imagine that there was such a person in the world as the King of the Peacocks."

When they entered the town, they saw that it was full of men and women, and that they all wore clothes made of peacocks' feathers, and that these were evidently considered fine things, for every place was covered with them. They met the King, who was driving in a beautiful little carriage of gold, studded with diamonds, and drawn by twelve peacocks at full gallop. This King of the Peacocks was so handsome, that the King and the Prince were delighted; he had long, light, curly hair, fair complexion, and wore a crown of peacocks' feathers. Directly he saw them, he guessed, seeing that they wore a different costume to the people of the country, that they were strangers, and wishing to ascertain if this was so, he ordered his carriage to stop, and sent for them.

The King and the Prince advanced, bowing low, and said, "Sire, we have come from afar, to show you a portrait." They drew forth Rosette's portrait and showed it to him. After gazing at it a while, the King of the Peacocks said, "I can scarcely believe that there is so beautiful a maiden in the whole world." "She is a thousand times more beautiful," said the King. "You are jesting," replied the King of the Peacocks. "Sire," rejoined the Prince, "here is my brother, who is a King, like yourself; he is called King, and my name is Prince; our sister, of whom this is the portrait, is the Princess Rosette. We have come to ask if you will marry her; she is good and beautiful, and we will give her, as dower, a bushel of golden crowns." "It is well," said the King. "I will gladly marry her; she shall want for nothing, and I shall love her greatly; but I require that she shall be as beautiful as her portrait, and if she is in the smallest degree less so, I shall make you pay for it with your lives." "We consent willingly," said both Rosette's brothers. "You consent?" added the King. "You will go to

prison then, and remain there until the Princess arrives." The Princes made no difficulty about this, for they knew well that Rosette was more beautiful than her portrait. They were well looked after while in prison, and were well served with all they required, and the King often went to see them. He kept Rosette's portrait in his room, and could scarcely rest day or night for looking at it. As the King and his brother could not go to her themselves, they wrote to Rosette, telling her to pack up as quickly as possible, and to start without delay, as the King of the Peacocks was awaiting her. They did not tell her that they were prisoners, for fear of causing her uneasiness.

The Princess scarcely knew how to contain herself with joy, when she received this message. She told everybody that the King of the Peacocks had been found, and that he wanted to marry her. Bonfires were lit, and guns fired, and quantities of sweetmeats and sugar were eaten; everyone who came to see the Princess, during the three days before her departure, was given bread-and-butter and jam, rolled wafers, and negus. After having thus dispensed hospitality to her visitors, she presented her beautiful dolls to her best friends, and handed over the government to the wisest elders of the town, begging them to look well after everything, to spend little, and to save up money for the King on his return. She also prayed them to take care of her peacock, for with her she only took her nurse, and her foster-sister, and her little green dog, Fretillon. They set out in a boat on the sea, carrying with them the bushel of golden crowns, and sufficient clothes for two changes a day for ten years. They made merry on their voyage, laughing and singing, and the nurse kept on asking the boatman if they were nearing the Kingdom of the Peacocks; for a long time, all he said was, "No, no, not yet." Then at last, when she asked again, "Are we anywhere near it now?" he answered, "We shall soon be there, very soon." Once more she said, "Are we near, are we anywhere near it now?" and he said, "Yes, we are now within reach of shore." On hearing this, the nurse

went to the end of the boat, and sitting down beside the boatman, said to him, "If you like, you can be rich for the remainder of your life." He replied, "I should like nothing better." She continued, "If you like, you can earn good money." "That would suit me very well," he answered. "Well," she went on, "then to-night, when the Princess is asleep, you must help me throw her into the sea. After she is drowned, I will dress my daughter in her fine clothes, and we will take her to the King of the Peacocks, who will only be too pleased to marry her; and as a reward to you, we will give you as many diamonds as you care to possess." The boatman was very much astonished at this proposal; he told the nurse that it was a pity to drown such a pretty Princess, and that he felt compassion for her; but the nurse fetched a bottle of wine and made him drink so much, that he had no longer any power to refuse.

Night having come, the Princess went to bed as usual, her little Fretillon lying at her feet, not even stirring one of his paws. Rosette slept soundly, but the wicked nurse kept awake, and went presently to fetch the boatman. She took him into the Princess's room, and together they lifted her up, feather bed, mattress, sheets, coverlet, and all, and threw them into the sea, the Princess all the while so fast asleep, that she never woke. But fortunately, her bed was made of Phœnix-feathers, which are extremely rare, and have the property of always floating on water; so that she was carried along in her bed as in a boat. The water, however, began gradually first to wet her feather bed, then her mattress, and Rosette began to feel uncomfortable, and turned from side to side, and then Fretillon woke up. He had a capital nose, and when he smelt the soles and cod-fish so near, he started barking at them, and this awoke all the other fish, who began swimming about. The bigger ones ran against the Princess's bed, which, not being attached to anything, span round and round like a whirligig. Rosette could not make out what was happening. "Is our boat having a dance on the water?" she said.

"I am not accustomed to feeling so uneasy as I am to-night," and all the while Fretillon continued barking, and going on as if he was out of his mind. The wicked nurse and the boatman heard him from afar, and said: "There's that funny little beast drinking our healths with his mistress. Let us make haste to land," for they were now just opposite the town of the King of the Peacocks.

He had sent down a hundred chariots to the landing-place; they were drawn by all kinds of rare animals, lions, bears, stags, wolves, horses, oxen, asses, eagles, and peacocks: and the chariot which was intended for the Princess was harnessed with six blue monkeys, that could jump, dance on the tight rope, and do endless clever tricks; they had beautiful trappings of crimson velvet, overlaid with plates of gold. Sixty young maids of honour were also in attendance, who had been chosen by the King for the amusement of the Princess; they were dressed in all sorts of colours, and gold and silver were the least precious of their adornments.

The nurse had taken great pains to dress her daughter finely; she had put on her Rosette's best robe, and decked her all over from head to foot with the Princess's diamonds; but with all this, she was still as ugly as an ape, with greasy black hair, crooked eyes, bowed legs, and a hump on her back; and, added to these deformities, she was besides of a disagreeable and sulky temper, and was always grumbling.

When the people saw her get out of the boat, they were so taken aback by her appearance, that they could not utter a sound. "What is the meaning of this?" she said. "Are you all asleep? Be off, and bring me something to eat! A nice set of beggars you are! I will have you all hanged." When they heard this, they murmured, "What an ugly creature! and she is as wicked as she is ugly! A nice wife for our King; well, we are not surprised! but it was scarcely worth the trouble to bring her from the other side of the world." Meanwhile she still behaved as if she were already mistress of all and everything, and





for no reason at all, boxed their ears, or gave a blow with her fist to everybody in turn.

As her escort was a very large one, the procession moved slowly, and she sat up in her chariot like a queen; but all the peacocks, who had stationed themselves on the trees, so as to salute her as she passed, and who had been prepared to shout, "Long live the beautiful Queen Rosette!" could only call out, "Fie, fie, how ugly she is!" as soon as they caught sight of her. She was so enraged at this, that she called to her guards, "Kill those rascally peacocks who are insulting me." But the peacocks quickly flew away, and only laughed at her.

The treacherous boatman, seeing and hearing all this, said in a low voice to the nurse, "There is something wrong, good mother; your daughter should have been better looking." She answered, "Hold your tongue, stupid, or you will bring us into trouble."

The King had word brought him that the Princess was approaching. "Well," he said, "have her brothers, I wonder, told me the truth? Is she more beautiful than her portrait?" "Sire," said those near him, "there will be nothing to wish for, if she is as beautiful." "You are right," replied the King, "I shall be well content with that. Come, let us go and see her," for he knew by the hubbub in the courtyard that she had arrived. He could not distinguish anything that was said, except, "Fie, fie, how ugly she is!" and he imagined that the people were calling out about some little dwarf or animal that she had brought with her, for it never entered his head that the words were applied to the Princess herself.

Rosette's portrait was carried uncovered, at the top of a long pole, and the King walked after it in solemn state, with all his nobles and his peacocks, followed by ambassadors from various kingdoms. The King of the Peacocks was very impatient to see his dear Rosette; but when he did see her—well, he very nearly died on the spot. He flew into a violent rage, he tore his clothes, he would not go near her, he felt quite afraid of her. "What!" he cried,

"have those two villains I have in prison had the boldness and impudence to make a laughing-stock of me, and to propose my marrying such a fright as that? They shall both be killed; and let that insolent woman, and the nurse, and the man who is with them, be immediately carried to the dungeon of my great tower, and there kept." While this was going on, the King and his brother, who knew that his sister was expected, had put on their bravest apparel ready to receive her; but instead of seeing their prison door open and being set at liberty, as they had hoped, the gaoler came with a body of soldiers and made them go down into a dark cellar, full of horrible reptiles, and where the water was up to their necks; no one was ever more surprised or distressed than they were. "Alas!" they said to one another, "this is indeed a melancholy marriage feast for us! What can have happened that we should be so ill-treated?" They did not know what in the world to think, except that they were to be killed, and they were very sorrowful about this. Three days passed, and no news reached them of any kind. At the end of that time, the King of the Peacocks came, and began calling out insulting things to them through a hole in the wall. "You called yourselves King and Prince, that I might fall into your trap, and engage myself to marry your sister; but you are nothing better than two beggars, who are not worth the water you drink. I am going to bring you before the judges, who will soon pass their verdict upon you; the rope to hang you with is already being made." "King of the Peacocks," replied the King, angrily, "do not act too rashly in this matter, or you may repent it. I am a King as well as you, and I have a fine kingdom, and rich clothing, and crowns, to say nothing of good gold pieces. You must be joking to talk like this of hanging us; have we stolen anything from you?"

When the King heard him speak so boldly, he did not know what to think, and he felt half inclined to let them and their sister go without putting them to death; but his

chief adviser, who was an arrant flatterer, dissuaded him from this, telling him that if he did not revenge the insult that had been put upon him, all the world would make fun of him, and look upon him as nothing better than a miserable little King worth a few coppers a day. The King thereupon swore that he would never forgive them, and ordered them to be brought to trial at once. This did not take long; the judges had only to look at the real Rosette's portrait and then at the Princess who had arrived, and without hesitation, they ordered the prisoners' heads to be cut off as a punishment for having lied to the King, since they had promised him a beautiful Princess, and had only given him an ugly peasant girl. They repaired with great ceremony to the prison to read this sentence to them; but the prisoners declared that they had not lied, that their sister was a Princess, and more beautiful than the day; that there must be something under this which they did not understand, and they asked for a respite of seven days, as before that time had expired their innocence might have been established. The King of the Peacocks, who had worked himself up to a high pitch of anger, could with great difficulty be induced to accord them this grace, but at last he consented.

While these things were going on at the Court, we must say something about poor Rosette. Both she and Fretillon were very much astonished, when daylight came, to find themselves in the middle of the sea, without a boat, and far from all help. She began to cry, and cried so piteously, that even the fishes had compassion on her: she did not know what to do, nor what would become of her. "There is no doubt," she said, "that the King of the Peacocks ordered me to be thrown into the sea, having repented his promise of marrying me, and to get rid of me quietly he has had me drowned. What a strange man!" she continued, "for I should have loved him so much! We should have been so happy together," and with that she burst out crying afresh, for she could not help still loving him. She remained

floating about on the sea for two days, wet to the skin, and almost dead with cold; she was so benumbed by it, that if it had not been for little Fretillon, who lay beside her and kept a little warmth in her, she could not have survived. She was famished with hunger, and seeing the oysters in their shells, she took as many of these as she wanted and ate them; Fretillon did the same, to keep himself alive, although he did not like such food. Rosette became still more alarmed when the night set in. "Fretillon," she said, "keep on barking, to frighten away the soles, for fear they should eat us." So Fretillon barked all night, and when the morning came, the Princess was floating near the shore. Close to the sea at this spot, there lived a good old man; he was poor, and did not care for the things of the world, and no one ever visited him in his little hut. He was very much surprised when he heard Fretillon barking, for no dogs ever came in that direction; he thought some travellers must have lost their way, and went out with the kind intention of putting them on the right road again. All at once he caught sight of the Princess and Fretillon floating on the sea, and the Princess, seeing him, stretched out her arms to him, crying out, "Good man, save me, or I shall perish; I have been in the water like this for two days." When he heard her speak so sorrowfully, he had great pity on her, and went back into his hut to fetch a long hook; he waded into the water up to his neck, and once or twice narrowly escaped drowning. At last, however, he succeeded in dragging the bed on to the shore. Rosette and Fretillon were overjoyed to find themselves again on dry ground; and were full of gratitude to the kind old man. Rosette wrapped herself in her coverlet, and walked bare-footed into the hut, where the old man lit a little fire of dry straw, and took one of his dead wife's best dresses out of a trunk, with some stockings and shoes, and gave them to the Princess. Dressed in her peasant's attire, she looked as beautiful as the day, and Fretillon capered

round her and made her laugh. The old man guessed that Rosette was some great lady, for her bed was embroidered with gold and silver, and her mattress was of satin. He begged her to tell him her story, promising not to repeat what she told him if she so wished. So she related to him all that had befallen her, crying bitterly the while, for she still thought that it was the King of the Peacocks who had ordered her to be drowned.

"What shall we do, my daughter?" said the old man. "You are a Princess and accustomed to the best of everything, and I have but poor fare to offer, black bread and radishes; but if you will let me, I will go and tell the King of the Peacocks that you are here; if he had once seen you, he would assuredly marry you." "Alas! he is a wicked man," said Rosette; "he would only put me to death; but if you can lend me a little basket, I will tie it round Fretillon's neck, and he will have very bad luck, if he does not manage to bring back some food."

The old man gave her a basket, which she fastened to Fretillon's neck, and then said, "Go to the best kitchen in the town, and bring me back what you find in the saucepan." Fretillon ran off to the town, and as there was no better kitchen than that of the King, he went in, uncovered the saucepan, and cleverly carried off all that was in it; then he returned to the hut. Rosette said to him, "Go back and take whatever you can find of the best in the larder." Fretillon went back to the King's larder, and took white bread, wine, and all sorts of fruits and sweetmeats; he was so laden that he could only just manage to carry the things home.

When the King of the Peacocks' dinner hour arrived, there was nothing for him either in the saucepan or in the larder; his attendants looked askance at one another, and the King was in a terrible rage. "It seems, then, that I am to have no dinner; but see that the spit is put before the fire, and let me have some good roast meat this evening." The evening came, and the Princess said to Fretillon, "Go

to the best kitchen in the town and bring me a joint of good roast meat." Fretillon obeyed, and knowing no better kitchen than that of the King, he went softly in, while the cooks' backs were turned, took the meat, which was of the best kind, from the spit, and carried it back in his basket to the Princess. She sent him back without delay to the larder, and he carried off all the preserves and sweetmeats that had been prepared for the King.

The King, having had no dinner, was very hungry, and ordered supper to be served early, but no supper was forthcoming; enraged beyond words, he was forced to go supperless to bed.

The same thing happened the following day, both as to dinner and supper; so that the King, for three days, was without meat or drink, for every time he sat down to table, it was found that the meal that had been prepared had been stolen. His chief adviser, fearing for the life of the King, hid himself in the corner of the kitchen to watch; he kept his eyes on the saucepan, that was boiling over the fire, and what was his surprise to see enter a little green dog, with one ear, that uncovered the pot, and put the meat in its basket. He followed it to see where it would go; he saw it leave the town, and still following, came to the old man's hut. Then he went and told the King that it was to a poor peasant's home that the food was carried morning and evening. The king was greatly astonished, and ordered more inquiries to be made. His chief adviser, anxious for favour, decided to go himself, taking with him a body of archers. They found the old man and Rosette at dinner, eating the meat that had been stolen from the King's kitchen, and they seized them, and bound them with cords, taking Fretillon prisoner at the same time.

They brought word to the King that the delinquents had been captured, and he replied, "To-morrow, the last day of reprieve for my two insolent prisoners will expire; they and these thieves shall die together." He then went into his court of justice. The old man threw himself on his knees before him, and begged to be allowed to tell him

everything. As he was speaking, the King looked towards the beautiful Princess, and his heart was touched when he saw her crying. When, therefore, the old man said that she was the Princess Rosette who had been thrown into the water, in spite of the weak condition he was in from having starved for so long, he gave three bounds of joy, ran and embraced her, and untied her cords, declaring the while that he loved her with all his heart.

They at once went to find the Princes, who thought they were going to be put to death, and came forward in great dejection and hanging their heads; the nurse and her daughter were brought in at the same time. The brothers and sister recognised one another, as soon as they were brought face to face, and Rosette threw herself on her brothers' necks. The nurse and her daughter, and the boatman, begged on their knees for mercy, and the universal rejoicing and their own joy were so great, that the King and the Princess pardoned them, and gave the good old man a handsome reward, and from that time he continued to live in the palace.

Finally, the King of the Peacocks did all in his power to atone for his conduct to the King and his brother, expressing the deepest regret at having treated them so badly. The nurse restored to Rosette all her beautiful clothes and the bushel of golden crowns, and the wedding festivities lasted a fortnight. Everyone was happy down to Fretillon, who ate nothing but partridge wings for the rest of his life.



"Now," said King Oberon, when the French Fay had finished, "let us hear of the doings in another part of the world."

Then up sprang a Norwegian Dwarf —a funny little fellow with a red pointed cap on his head —and exclaimed, "I can tell you of the doings of one of those naughty rascals who get a bad name with man-

kind, of how he had a terrible fight with a big white bear and of how he was at length driven away."

"Good," said the King, and "Good," echoed Titania, and at once the Norwegian Dwarf jumped on to the stool, tucked his legs beneath him tailorwise and began the story of





The Bear and Skrattel.

One Christmas Day, the King of Norway sat in the great hall of his palace, holding a feast. "Here's a health," said he, "to our brother the King of Denmark! What present shall we send our royal brother, as a pledge of our good-will, this Christmas-time?" "Send him, please your majesty," said the Norseman Gunter, who was the king's chief huntsman, "one of our fine white bears, that his liegemen may show their little ones what sort of kittens we play with." "Well said, Gunter!" cried the king; "but how shall we find a bear that will travel so long a journey willingly, and will know how to behave himself to our worthy brother when he reaches him?" "Please your majesty," said Gunter, "I have a glorious fellow, as white as snow, that I caught when he was a cub; he will follow me wherever I go, play with my children, stand on his hind legs, and behave himself as well as any gentleman ought to do. He is at your service, and I will myself take him wherever you choose."

So the king was well pleased, and ordered Gunter to set off at once with master Bruin: "Start with the

morning's dawn," said he, "and make the best of your way."

The Norseman went home to his house in the forest; and early next morning he waked master Bruin, put the king's collar round his neck, and away they went over rocks and valleys, lakes and seas, the nearest road to the court of the King of Denmark. When they arrived there, the king was away on a journey, and Gunter and his fellow-traveller set out to follow. It was bright weather, the sun shone, and the birds sang, as they journeyed merrily on, day after day, over hill and over dale, till they came within a day's journey of where the king was.

All that afternoon they travelled through a gloomy, dark forest; but towards evening the wind began to whistle through the trees, and the clouds began to gather and threaten a stormy night. The road, too, was very rough, and it was not easy to tell which was most tired, Bruin or his master. What made the matter worse was, that they had found no inn that day by the roadside, and their provisions had fallen short, so that they had no very pleasant prospect before them for the night. "A pretty affair this!" said Gunter, "I am likely to be charmingly off here in the woods, with an empty stomach, a damp bed, and a bear for my bedfellow."

While the Norseman was turning this over in his mind, the wind blew harder and harder, and the clouds grew darker and darker: the bear shook his ears, and his master looked at his wits' end, when to his great joy a woodman came whistling along out of the woods, by the side of his horse dragging a load of faggots. As soon as he came up, Gunter stopped him, and begged hard for a night's lodging for himself and his countryman.

The woodman seemed hearty and good-natured enough, and was quite ready to find shelter for the huntsman; but as to the bear, he had never seen such a beast before in his life, and would have nothing to do with him on any terms. The huntsman begged hard for his friend, and told how he was bringing him as a present to the King of

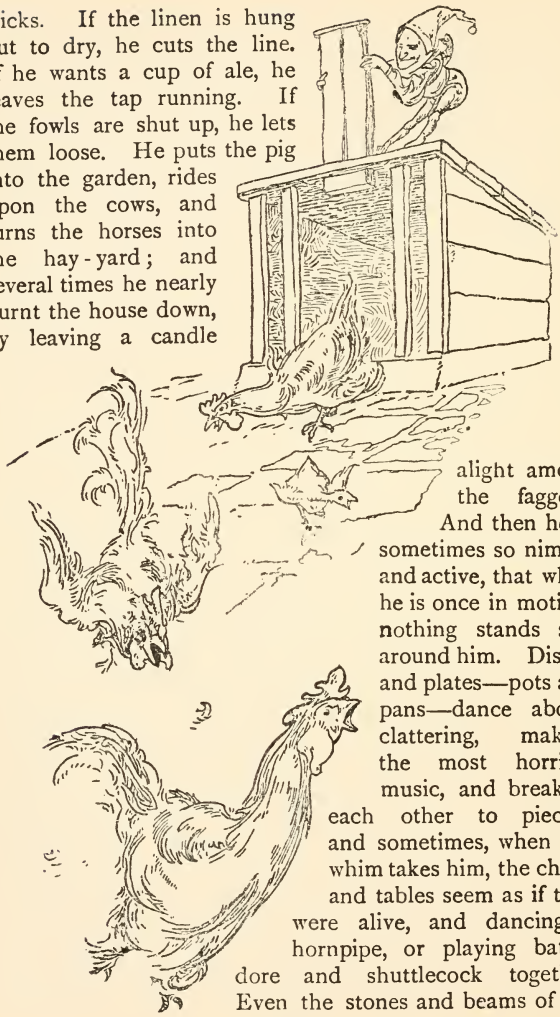
Denmark; and how he was the most good-natured, best-behaved animal in the world, though he must allow that he was by no means one of the handsomest.

The woodman, however, was not to be moved. His wife, he was sure, would not like such a guest, and who could say what he might take it into his head to do? Besides, he should lose his dog and his cat, his ducks and his geese; for they would all run away for fright, whether the bear was disposed to be friends with them or not.

"Good-night, master huntsman!" said he; "if you and old shaggy-back there cannot part, I am afraid you must e'en stay where you are, though you will have a sad night of it, no doubt." Then he cracked his whip, whistled up his horse, and set off once more on his way homewards.

The huntsman grumbled, and Bruin grunted, as they followed slowly after; when to their great joy they saw the woodman, before he had gone many yards, pull up his horse once more and turn round. "Stay, stay!" said he; "I think I can tell you of a plan better than sleeping in a ditch. I know where you may find shelter, if you will run the risk of a little trouble from an unlucky imp, that has taken up its abode in my old house down the hill yonder. You must know, friend, that till last winter I lived in yon snug little house that you will see at the foot of the hill if you come this way. Everything went smoothly on with us till one unlucky night, when the storm blew as it seems likely to do to-night, some spiteful guest took it into his head to pay us a visit; and there have ever since been such noises, clattering, and scampering up stairs and down, from midnight till the cock crows in the morning, that at last we were fairly driven out of house and home. What he is like no one knows; for we never saw him or anything belonging to him, except a little crooked high-heeled shoe, that he left one night in the pantry. But though we have not seen him, we know he has a hand or a paw as heavy as lead; for when it pleases him to lay it upon any one, down he goes as if the blacksmith's hammer had hit him. There is no end of his monkey

tricks. If the linen is hung out to dry, he cuts the line. If he wants a cup of ale, he leaves the tap running. If the fowls are shut up, he lets them loose. He puts the pig into the garden, rides upon the cows, and turns the horses into the hay-yard; and several times he nearly burnt the house down, by leaving a candle



alight among the faggots. And then he is sometimes so nimble and active, that when he is once in motion, nothing stands still around him. Dishes and plates—pots and pans—dance about, clattering, making the most horrible music, and breaking each other to pieces: and sometimes, when the whim takes him, the chairs and tables seem as if they were alive, and dancing a hornpipe, or playing battledore and shuttlecock together. Even the stones and beams of the

house seem rattling against one another; and it is of no use putting things in order, for the first freak the imp took would turn everything upside down again.

"My wife and I bore such a lodger as long as we could, but at length we were fairly beaten; and as he seemed to have taken up his abode in the house, we thought it best to give up to him what he wanted: and the little rascal knew what we were about when we were moving, and seemed afraid we should not go soon enough. So he helped us off: for on the morning we were to start, as we were going to put our goods upon the waggon, there it stood before the door ready loaded: and when we started we heard a loud laugh; and a little sharp voice cried out of the window, 'Good-bye, neighbours!' So now he has our old house all to himself to play his gambols in, whenever he likes to sleep within doors; and we have built ourselves a snug cottage on the other side of the hill, where we live as well as we can, though we have no great room to make merry in. Now if you, and your ugly friend there, like to run the hazard of taking up your quarters in the elf's house, pray do! Yonder is the road. He may not be at home to-night."

"We will try our luck," said Gunter: "anything is better to my mind than sleeping out of doors such a night as this. Your troublesome neighbour will perhaps think so too, and we may have to fight for our lodging: but never mind, Bruin is rather an awkward hand to quarrel with; and the goblin may perhaps find a worse welcome from him than your house-dog could give him. He will at any rate let him know what a bear's hug is; for I dare say he has not been far enough north to know much about it yet."

Then the woodman gave Gunter a faggot to make his fire with, and wished him a good-night. He and the bear soon found their way to the deserted house; and no one being at home they walked into the kitchen and made a capital fire.

"Lack-a-day!" said the Norseman; "I forgot one thing

—I ought to have asked that good man for some supper; I have nothing left but some dry bread. However, this is better than sleeping in the woods: we must make the most of what we have, keep ourselves warm, and get to bed as soon as we can." So after eating up all their crusts, and drinking some water from the well close by, the huntsman wrapt himself up close in his cloak, and lay down in the snuggest corner he could find. Bruin rolled himself up in the corner of the wide fire-place; and both were fast asleep, the fire out, and everything quiet within doors, long before midnight.

Just as the clock struck twelve the storm began to get louder—the wind blew—a slight noise within the room wakened the huntsman, and all on a sudden in popped a little ugly skrattel, scarce three spans high; with a hump on his back, a face like a dried pippin, a nose like a ripe mulberry, and an eye that had lost its neighbour. He had high-heeled shoes, and a pointed red cap; and came dragging after him a nice fat kid, ready skinned, and fit for roasting. "A rough night this," grumbled the goblin to himself; "but, thanks to that booby woodman, I've a house to myself: and now for a hot supper and a glass of good ale till the cock crows."

No sooner said than done: the skrattel busied himself about, here and there; presently the fire blazed up, the kid was put on the spit and turned merrily round. A keg of ale made its appearance from a closet: the cloth was laid, and the kid was soon dished up for eating. Then the little imp, in the joy of his heart, rubbed his hands, tossed up his red cap, danced before the hearth, and sang his song—

"Oh! 'tis weary enough abroad to bide,
In the shivery midnight blast;
And 'tis dreary enough alone to ride,
Hungry and cold,
On the wintry wold,
Where the drifting snow falls fast.

"But 'tis cheery enough to revel by night,
In the crackling faggot's light:
'Tis merry enough to have and to hold
The savoury roast,
And the nut-brown toast,
With jolly good ale and old."

The huntsman lay snug all this time; sometimes quaking, in dread of getting into trouble, and sometimes licking his lips at the savoury supper before him, and half in the mind to fight for it with the imp. However, he kept himself quiet in his corner; till all of a sudden the little man's eye wandered from his cheering ale-cup to Bruin's carcase, as he lay rolled up like a ball, fast asleep in the chimney-corner.

The imp turned round sharp in an instant, and crept softly nearer and nearer to where Bruin lay, looking at him very closely, and not able to make out what in the world he was. "One of the family, I suppose!" said he to himself. But just then Bruin gave his ears a shake, and showed a little of his shaggy muzzle. "Oh ho!" said the imp, "that's all, is it? But what a large one! Where could he come from? and how came he here? What shall I do? Shall I let him alone or drive him out? Perhaps he may do me some mischief, and I am not afraid of mice or rats. So here goes! I have driven all the rest of the live stock out of the house, and why should I be afraid of sending this brute after them?"

With that the elf walked softly to the corner of the room, and taking up the spit, stole back on tip-toe till he got quite close to the bear; then raising up his weapon, down came a rattling thump across Bruin's mazard, that sounded as hollow as a drum. The bear raised himself slowly up, snorted, shook his head, then scratched it,—opened first one eye, then the other, took a turn across the room, and grinned at his enemy; who, somewhat alarmed, ran back a few paces, and stood with the spit in his hand, foreseeing a rough attack. And it soon came; for the bear, rearing himself up, walked leisurely forward, and

putting out one of his paws caught hold of the spit, jerked it out of the goblin's hand, and sent it spinning to the other end of the kitchen.

And now began a fierce battle. This way and that way flew tables and chairs, pots and pans. The elf was one moment on the bear's back, lugging his ears and pommelling him with blows that might have felled an ox. In the next, the bear would throw him up in the air, and treat him as he came down with a hug that would make the little imp squall. Then up he would jump upon one of the beams out of Bruin's reach; and soon, watching his chance, would be down astride upon his back.

Meantime Gunter had become sadly frightened, and seeing the oven door open, crept in for shelter from the fray, and lay there quaking for fear. The struggle went on thus a long time, without its seeming at all clear who would get the better—biting, scratching, hugging, clawing, roaring, and growling, till the whole house rang. The elf, however, seemed to grow weaker and weaker: the rivals stood for a moment as if to get breath, and the bear was getting ready for a fierce attack, when, all in a moment, the skrattel dashed his red cap right in his eye, and while Bruin was smarting with the blow and trying to recover his sight, darted to the door, and was out of sight in a moment, though the wind blew, the rain pattered, and the storm raged, in a merciless manner.

"Well done! Bravo, Bruin!" cried the huntsman, as he crawled out of the oven, and ran and bolted the door: "thou hast combed his locks rarely; and as for thine own ears, they are rather the worse for pulling. But come, let us make the best of the good cheer our friend has left us!" So saying, they fell to and ate a hearty supper. The huntsman, wishing the skrattel a good night and pleasant dreams in a cup of his sparkling ale, laid himself down and slept till morning; and Bruin tried to do the same, as well as his aching bones would let him.

In the morning the huntsman made ready to set out on his way: and had not got far from the door before he met



the woodman, who was eager to hear how he had passed the night. Then Gunter told him how he had been awakened, what sort of creature the elf was, and how he and Bruin had fought it out. "Let us hope," said he, "you will now be well rid of the gentleman: I suspect he will not come where he is likely to get any more of Bruin's hugs; and thus you will be well paid for your entertainment of us, which, to tell the truth, was none of the best: for if your ugly little tenant had not brought his supper with him, we should have had but empty stomachs this morning."

The huntsman and his fellow-traveller journeyed on: and let us hope they reached the King of Denmark safe and sound: but, to tell the truth, I know nothing more of that part of the story.

The woodman, meantime, went to his work; and did not fail to watch at night to see whether the skrattel came, or whether he was thoroughly frightened out of his old haunt by the bear, or whatever he might take the beast to be that had handled him as he never was handled before. But three nights passed over, and no traces being seen or heard of him, the woodman began to think of moving back to his old house.

On the fourth day he was out at his work in the forest; and as he was taking shelter under a tree from a cold storm of sleet and rain that passed over, he heard a little cracked voice singing, or rather croaking in a mournful tone. So he crept along quietly, and peeped over some bushes, and there sat the very same figure that the huntsman had described to him. The goblin was sitting without any hat or cap on his head, with a woe-begone face, and with his jacket torn into shreds, and his leg scratched and smeared with blood, as if he had been creeping through a bramble-bush. The woodman listened quietly to his song, and it ran as before—

"Oh! 'tis weary enough abroad to bide,
In the shivery midnight blast;
And 'tis dreary enough alone to ride

Hungry and cold,
On the wintry wold,
Where the drifting snow falls fast."

"Sing us the other verse, man!" cried the woodman; for he could not help cracking a joke on his old enemy, who he saw was sadly in the dumps at the loss of his good cheer and the shelter against the bad weather. But the instant his voice was heard the little imp jumped up, stamped with rage, and was out of sight in the twinkling of an eye.

The woodman finished his work and was going home in the evening, whistling by his horse's side, when, all of a sudden, he saw, standing on a high bank by the wayside, the very same little imp, looking as grim and sulky as before. "Hark ye, bumpkin?" cried the skrattel; "canst thou hear, fellow? Is thy great cat alive, and at home still?" "My cat?" said the woodman. "Thy great white cat, man!" thundered out the little imp. "Oh, my cat!" said the woodman, at last recollecting himself. "Oh, yes to be sure! alive and well, I thank you: very happy, I'm sure, to see you and all friends, whenever you will do us the favour to call. And hark ye, friend! as you seem to be so fond of my great cat, you may like to know that she had five kittens last night." "Five kittens?" muttered the elf. "Yes," replied the woodman, "five of the most beautiful white kits you ever saw,—so like the old cat, it would do your heart good to see the whole family—such soft, gentle paws—such delicate whiskers—such pretty little mouths!" "Five kittens?" muttered or rather shrieked out the imp again. "Yes, to be sure!" said the woodman; "five kittens! Do look in to-night, about twelve o'clock—the time, you know, that you used to come and see us. The old cat will be so glad to show them to you, and we shall be so happy to see you once more. But where can you have been all this time?"

"I come? not I, indeed!" shrieked the skrattel. "What do I want with the little wretches? Did not I see the mother once? Keep your kittens to yourself: I must

be off,—this is no place for me. Five kittens! So there are six of them now! Good-bye to you, you'll see me no



more; so bad luck to your ugly cat and your beggarly house!" "And bad luck to you, Mr Crookback!" cried the woodman, as he threw him the red cap he had left behind in his battle with Bruin. "Keep clear of my cat, and let us hear no more of your pranks, and be hanged to you!"

So, now that he knew his troublesome guest had taken

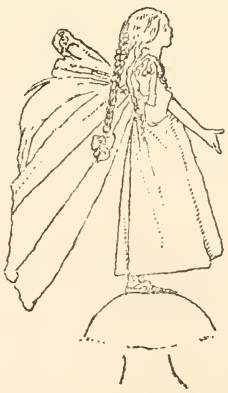
his leave, the woodman soon moved back all his goods, and his wife and children into their snug old house. And there they lived happily, for the elf never came to see them any more; and the woodman every day after dinner drank, "Long life to the King of Norway," for sending the cat that cleared his house of vermin.

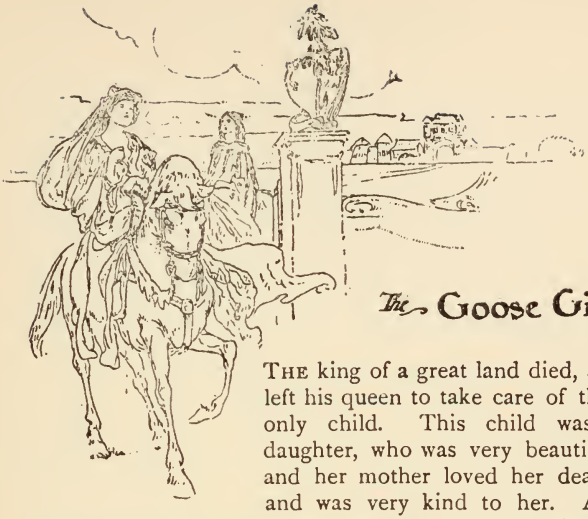
When the Norwegian Red-cap had finished his story Titania thought it time that someone should tell another love tale, and a second German Fairy came forward and said,

"Would your majesty like to hear again the story of the goose-girl princess and the horse Falada?"

"Oh, yes," answered the Queen, who if she really liked a story was always glad to hear it told to her several times, "Oh, yes, the pretty story of the goose-girl is one of my favourites."

The second German Fairy then stepped on to the stool and quietly began to recount the sad experiences of the princess who became





The Goose Girl.

THE king of a great land died, and left his queen to take care of their only child. This child was a daughter, who was very beautiful; and her mother loved her dearly, and was very kind to her. And there was a good fairy too, who was fond of the princess, and helped her mother to watch over her. When she grew up, she was betrothed to a prince who lived a great way off; and as the time drew near for her to be married, she got ready to set off on her journey to his country. Then the queen, her mother, packed up a great many costly things; jewels, and gold, and silver; trinkets, fine dresses, and in short everything that became a royal bride. And she gave her a waiting-maid to ride with her, and give her into the bridegroom's hands; and each had a horse for the journey. Now the princess's horse was the fairy's gift, and it was called Falada, and could speak.

When the time came for them to set out, the fairy went into her bed-chamber, and took a little knife, and cut off a lock of her hair, and gave it to the princess, and said, "Take care of it, dear child; for it is a charm that may be of use to you on the road." Then they all took a sorrowful leave of the princess; and she put the lock of hair into her bosom, got upon her horse, and set off on her journey to her bridegroom's kingdom.

One day, as they were riding along by a brook, the

princess began to feel very thirsty; and she said to her maid, "Pray get down, and fetch me some water in my golden cup out of yonder brook, for I want to drink." "Nay," said the maid, "if you are thirsty, get off yourself, and stoop down by the water and drink; I shall not be your waiting-maid any longer." Then she was so thirsty that she got down, and knelt over the little brook, and drank; for she was frightened, and dared not bring out her golden cup; and she wept and said, "Alas! what will become of me?" And the lock answered her, and said—

"Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly, would she rue it."

But the princess was very gentle and meek, so she said nothing to her maid's ill behaviour, but got upon her horse again.

Then all rode further on their journey, till the day grew so warm, and the sun so scorching, that the bride began to feel very thirsty again; and at last, when they came to a river, she forgot her maid's rude speech, and said, "Pray get down, and fetch me some water to drink in my golden cup." But the maid answered her, and even spoke more haughtily than before: "Drink if you will, but I shall not be your waiting-maid." Then the princess was so thirsty that she got off her horse, and lay down, and held her head over the running stream, and cried and said, "What will become of me?" And the lock of hair answered her again—

"Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly, would she rue it."

And as she leaned down to drink the lock of hair fell from her bosom, and floated away with the water. Now she was so frightened that she did not see it; but her maid saw it, and was very glad, for she knew the charm; and she saw that the poor bride would be in her power, now that she had lost the hair. So when the bride had done drinking, and would have got upon Falada again, the

maid said, "I shall ride upon Falada, and you may have my horse instead": so she was forced to give up her horse, and soon afterwards to take off her royal clothes and put on her maid's shabby ones.

At last, as they drew near the end of their journey, this treacherous servant threatened to kill her mistress if she ever told any one what had happened. But Falada saw it all, and marked it well.

Then the waiting-maid got upon Falada, and the real bride rode upon the other horse, and they went on in this way till at last they came to the royal court. There was great joy at their coming, and the prince flew to meet them, and lifted the maid from her horse, thinking she was the one who was to be his wife; and she was led upstairs to the royal chamber; but the true princess was told to stay in the court below.

Now the old king happened just then to have nothing else to do; so he amused himself by sitting at his kitchen-window, looking at what was going on; and he saw her in the courtyard. As she looked very pretty, and too delicate for a waiting-maid, he went up into the royal chamber to ask the bride who it was she had brought with her, that was thus left standing in the court below. "I brought her with me for the sake of her company on the road," said she; "pray give the girl some work to do, that she may not be idle." The old king could not for some time think of any work for her to do; but at last he said, "I have a lad who takes care of my geese; she may go and help him." Now the name of this lad, that the real bride was to help in watching the king's geese, was Curdken.

But the false bride said to the prince, "Dear husband, pray do me one piece of kindness." "That I will," said the prince. "Then tell one of your slaughterers to cut off the head of the horse I rode upon, for it was very unruly, and plagued me sadly on the road"; but the truth was, she was very much afraid lest Falada should some day or other speak, and tell all she had done to the princess. She carried her point, and the faithful Falada was killed;

but when the true princess heard of it, she wept, and begged the man to nail up Falada's head against a large dark gate of the city, through which she had to pass every morning and evening, that there she might still see him sometimes. Then the slaughterer said he would do as she wished; and cut off the head, and nailed it up under the dark gate.

Early the next morning, as she and Curdken went out through the gate, she said sorrowfully—

"Falada, Falada, there thou hangest!"

and the head answered—

"Bride, bride, there thou gangest!
Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly, would she rue it."

Then they went out of the city, and drove the geese on. And when she came to the meadow, she sat down upon a bank there, and let down her waving locks of hair, which were all of pure silver; and when Curdken saw it glitter in the sun, he ran up, and would have pulled some of the locks out, but she cried—

"Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd,
Till the silvery locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!"

Then there came a wind, so strong that it blew off Curdken's hat; and away it flew over the hills: and he was forced to turn and run after it; till, by the time he came back, she had done combing and curling her hair, and had put it up again safe. Then he was very angry and sulky, and would not speak to her at all; but they watched the geese until it grew dark in the evening, and then drove them homewards.

The next morning, as they were going through the dark gate, the poor girl looked up at Falada's head, and cried—

"Falada, Falada, there thou hangest!"

and it answered—

"Bride, bride, there thou gangest!
Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly, would she rue it."

Then she drove on the geese, and sat down again in the meadow, and began to comb out her hair as before; and Curdken ran up to her, and wanted to take hold of it; but she cried out quickly—

"Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd,
Till the silvery locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!"

Then a wind came and blew away his hat; and off it flew a great way, over the hills and far away, so that he had to run after it; and when he came back she had bound up her hair again, and all was safe. So they watched the geese till it grew dark.

In the evening, after they came home, Curdken went to the old king, and said, "I cannot have that strange girl to help me to keep the geese any longer." "Why?" said the king. "Because, instead of doing any good, she does nothing but tease me all day long." Then the king made him tell him what had happened. And Curdken said, "When we go in the morning through the dark gate with our flock of geese, she cries and talks with the head of a horse that hangs upon the wall, and says—

"Falada, Falada, there thou hangest!"

and the head answers,

"Bride, bride, there thou gangest!
Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly, would she rue it."

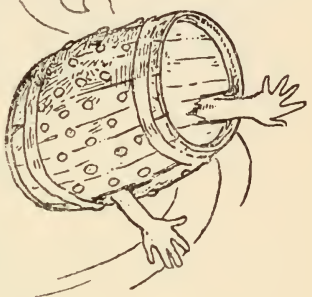
And Curdken went on telling the king what had happened upon the meadow where the geese fed; how his hat was blown away; and how he was forced to run after it, and to leave his flock of geese to themselves. But the old king told the boy to go out again the next day: and when morning came, he placed himself behind the dark gate, and heard how she spoke to Falada, and how Falada answered. Then he went into the field, and hid himself in a bush by the meadow's side; and he soon saw with his own eyes how they drove the flock of geese; and how after a little time, she let down her hair that glittered in the sun. And then he heard her say—

"Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd,
Till the silvery locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!"

And soon came a gale of wind, and carried away Curdken's hat, and away went Curdken after it, while the girl went on combing and curling her hair. All this the old king saw: so he went home without being seen; and when the little goose-girl came back in the evening he called her aside, and asked her why she did so: but she burst into tears, and said, "That I must not tell you or any man, or I shall lose my life."

But the old king begged so hard, that she had no peace till she had told him all the tale, from beginning to end, word for word. And it was very lucky for her that she did so, for when she had done the king ordered royal clothes to be put upon her, and gazed on her with wonder, she was so beautiful. Then he called his son, and told

him that he had only the false bride; for that she was merely a waiting-maid, while the true bride stood by. And the young king rejoiced when he saw her beauty, and heard how meek and patient she had been; and without saying anything to the false bride, the king ordered a great feast to be got ready for all his court. The bridegroom sat at the top, with the false princess on one side, and the true one on the other; but nobody knew her again, for her beauty was quite dazzling to their eyes; and she did not seem at all like the little goose-girl, now that she had her brilliant dress on.



When they had eaten and drank, and were very merry, the old king said he would tell them a tale. So he began, and told all the story of the princess, as if it was one that he had once heard; and he asked the true waiting-maid what she thought ought to be done to any one who would behave thus. "Nothing better," said this false bride, "than that she should be thrown into a cask stuck round with sharp nails, and that two white horses should be put to it, and should drag it from street to street till she was dead." "Thou art she!" said the old king; "and as thou hast judged thyself, so shall it be done to thee." And the young king was then married to his true wife, and they reigned over the kingdom in peace and happiness all their lives; and the good fairy came to see them, and restored the faithful Falada to life again.

Having finished her tale, the second German Fairy was rising to return to her place in the circle, when King Oberon, who saw how pleased the Queen was made her yet better pleased by saying,

"Perhaps we can have another story from the same story-teller."

"Oh, yes," said Queen Titania, and the Fairy sat down again, and without any false modesty began the tale of





The Water of Life

Long before you or I were born, there reigned, in a country a great way off, a king who had three sons. This king once fell very ill,—so ill that nobody thought he could live. His sons were very much grieved at their father's sickness; and as they were walking together very mournfully in the garden of the palace, a little old man met them and asked what was the matter. They told him that their father was very ill, and that they were afraid nothing could save him. "I know what would," said the little old man; "it is the Water of Life. If he could have a draught of it he would be well again; but it is very hard to get." Then the eldest son said, "I will soon find it": and he went to the sick king, and begged that he might go in search of the Water of Life, as it was the only thing that could save him. "No," said the king, "I had rather die than place you in such great danger as you must meet with in your journey." But he begged so hard that the king let him go; and the prince thought to himself, "if I bring my father this water, he will make me sole heir to his kingdom."

Then he set out: and when he had gone on his way

some time he came to a deep valley, overhung with rocks and woods; and as he looked around, he saw standing above him on one of the rocks a little ugly dwarf, with a sugarloaf cap and a scarlet cloak; and the dwarf called to him and said, "Prince, whither so fast?" "What is that to thee, you ugly imp?" said the prince haughtily, and rode on.

But the dwarf was enraged at his behaviour, and laid a fairy spell of ill-luck upon him; so that as he rode on the mountain pass became narrower and narrower, and at last the way was so straightened that he could not go a step forward: and when he thought to have turned his horse round and go back the way he came, he heard a loud laugh ringing round him, and found that the path was closed behind him, so that he was shut in all round. He next tried to get off his horse and make his way on foot, but again the laugh rang in his ears, and he found himself unable to move a step, and thus he was forced to abide spell-bound.

Meantime the old king was lingering on in daily hope of his son's return, till at last the second son said, "Father, I will go in search of the Water of Life." For he thought to himself, "My brother is surely dead, and the kingdom will fall to me if I find the water." The king was at first very unwilling to let him go, but at last yielded to his wish. So he set out and followed the same road which his brother had done, and met with the same little elf, who stopped him at the same spot in the mountains, saying, as before, "Prince, prince, whither so fast?" "Mind your own affairs, busy-body!" said the prince, scornfully, and rode on.

But the dwarf put the same spell upon him as he had put on his elder brother; and he, too, was at last obliged to take up his abode in the heart of the mountains. Thus it is with proud silly people, who think themselves above every one else, and are too proud to ask or take advice.

When the second prince had thus been gone a long time, the youngest son said he would go and search for

the Water of Life, and trusted he should soon be able to make his father well again. So he set out, and the dwarf met him too at the same spot in the valley, among the mountains, and said, "Prince, whither so fast?" And the prince said, "I am going in search of the Water of Life; because my father is ill, and like to die: can you help me? Pray be kind, and aid me if you can!" "Do you know where it is to be found?" asked the dwarf. "No," said the prince, "I do not. Pray tell me if you know." "Then as you have spoken to me kindly, and are wise enough to seek for advice, I will tell you how and where to go. The water you seek springs from a well in an enchanted castle; and, that you may be able to reach it in safety, I will give you an iron wand and two little loaves of bread; strike the iron door of the castle three times with the wand, and it will open: two hungry lions will be lying down inside gaping for their prey, but if you throw them the bread they will let you pass; then hasten on to the well, and take some of the Water of Life before the clock strikes twelve; for if you tarry longer the door will shut upon you for ever."

Then the prince thanked his little friend with the scarlet cloak for his friendly aid; and took the wand and the bread, and went travelling on and on, over sea and over land, till he came to his journey's end, and found everything to be as the dwarf had told him. The door flew open at the third stroke of the wand, and when the lions were quieted he went on through the castle and came at length to a beautiful hall. Around it he saw several knights sitting in a trance; then he pulled off their rings and put them on his own fingers. In another room he saw on a table a sword and a loaf of bread, which he also took. Further on he came to a room where a beautiful young lady sat upon a couch; and she welcomed him joyfully, and said, if he would set her free from the spell that bound her, the kingdom should be his, if he would come back in a year and marry her. Then she told him that the well that held the Water of Life was in the palace

gardens; and bade him make haste, and draw what he wanted before the clock struck twelve.

He went on; and as he walked through beautiful gardens, he came to a delightful shady spot in which stood a couch; and he thought to himself, as he felt tired, that he would rest himself for awhile, and gaze on the lovely scenes around him. So he laid himself down, and sleep fell upon him unawares, so that he did not wake up till the clock was striking a quarter to twelve. Then he sprang from the couch dreadfully frightened, ran to the well, filled a cup that was standing by him full of water, and hastened to get away in time. Just as he was going out of the iron door it struck twelve, and the door fell so quickly upon him that it snapt off a piece of his heel.

When he found himself safe, he was overjoyed to think that he had got the Water of Life; and as he was going on his way homewards, he passed by the little dwarf, who, when he saw the sword and the loaf, said, "You have made a noble prize; with the sword you can at a blow slay whole armies, and the bread will never fail you." Then the prince thought to himself, "I cannot go home to my father without my brothers"; so he said, "My dear friend, cannot you tell me where my two brothers are, who set out in search of the Water of Life before me, and never came back?" "I have shut them up by a charm between two mountains," said the dwarf, "because they were proud and ill-behaved, and scorned to ask advice." The prince begged so hard for his brothers, that the dwarf at last set them free, though unwillingly, saying, "Beware of them, for they have bad hearts." Their brother, however, was greatly rejoiced to see them, and told them all that had happened to him; how he had found the Water of Life, and had taken a cup full of it; and how he had set a beautiful princess free from a spell that bound her; and how she had engaged to wait a whole year, and then to marry him, and to give him the kingdom.

Then they all three rode on together, and on their way home came to a country that was laid waste by war and a

dreadful famine, so that it was feared all must die for want. But the prince gave the king of the land the bread, and all his kingdom ate of it. And he lent the king the wonderful sword, and he slew the enemy's army with it; and thus the kingdom was once more in peace and plenty. In the same manner he befriended two other countries through which they passed on their way.

When they came to the sea, they got into a ship; and during their voyage the two eldest said to themselves, "Our brother has got the water which we could not find, therefore our father will forsake us and give him the kingdom, which is our right"; so they were full of envy and revenge, and agreed together how they could ruin him. Then they waited till he was fast asleep, and poured the Water of Life out of the cup, and took it for themselves, giving him bitter sea-water instead.

When they came to their journey's end, the youngest son brought his cup to the sick king, that he might drink and be healed. Scarcely, however, had he tasted the bitter sea-water when he became worse even than he was before; and then both the elder sons came in, and blamed the youngest for what he had done; and said that he wanted to poison their father, but that they had found the Water of Life, and had brought it with them. He no sooner began to drink of what they brought him, than he felt his sickness leave him, and was as strong and well as in his younger days. Then they went to their brother, and laughed at him, and said, "Well, brother, you found the Water of Life, did you? You have had the trouble and we shall have the reward. Pray, with all your cleverness, why did not you manage to keep your eyes open? Next year one of us will take away your beautiful princess, if you do not take care. You had better say nothing about this to our father, for he does not believe a word you say; and if you tell tales, you shall lose your life into the bargain: but be quiet, and we will let you off."

The old king was still very angry with his youngest

son, and thought that he really meant to have taken away his life; so he called his court together, and asked what should be done, and all agreed that he ought to be put to death. The prince knew nothing of what was going on, till one day, when the king's chief huntsman went a-hunting with him, and they were alone in the wood together, the huntsman looked so sorrowful that the prince said, "My friend, what is the matter with you?" "I cannot and dare not tell you," said he. But the prince begged very hard, and said, "Only tell me what it is, and do not think I shall be angry, for I will forgive you." "Alas!" said the huntsman, "the king has ordered me to shoot you." The prince started at this, and said, "Let me live, and I will change dresses with you; you shall take my royal coat to show to my father, and do you give me your shabby one." "With all my heart," said the huntsman; "I am sure I shall be glad to save you, for I could not have shot you." Then he took the prince's coat, and gave him the shabby one, and went away through the wood.

Some time after, three grand embassies came to the old king's court, with rich gifts of gold and precious stones for his youngest son; now all these were sent from the three kings to whom he had lent his sword and loaf of bread, in order to rid them of their enemy and feed their people. This touched the old king's heart, and he thought his son might still be guiltless, and said to his court, "O that my son were still alive! how it grieves me that I had him killed!" "He is still alive," said the huntsman; "and I am glad that I had pity on him, and saved him: for when the time came, I could not shoot him, but let him go in peace, and brought home his royal coat." At this the king was overwhelmed with joy, and made it known throughout all his kingdom, that if his son would come back to his court he would forgive him.

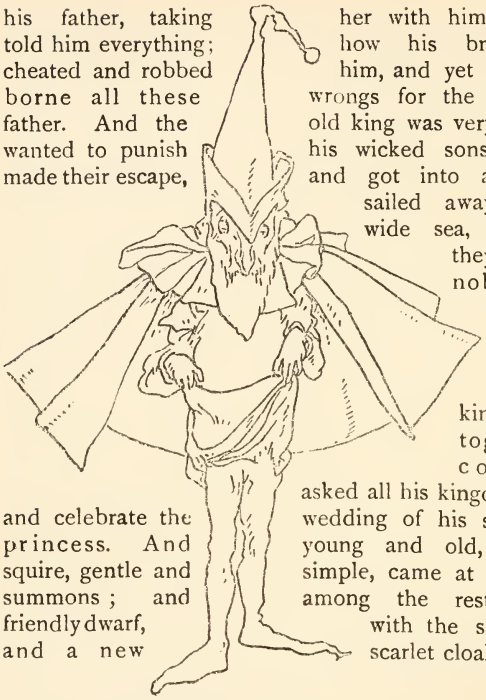
Meanwhile the princess was eagerly waiting till her deliverer should come back; and had a road made leading up to her palace all of shining gold; and told her courtiers

that whoever came on horseback, and rode straight up to the gate upon it, was her true lover; and that they must let him in: but whoever rode on one side of it, they must be sure was not the right one; and that they must send him away at once.

The time soon came, when the eldest brother thought that he would make haste to go to the princess, and say that he was the one who had set her free, and that he should have her for his wife, and the kingdom with her. As he came before the palace and saw the golden road, he stopped to look at it, and he thought to himself, "It is a pity to ride upon this beautiful road"; so he turned aside and rode on the right-hand side of it. But when he came to the gate, the guards, who had seen the road he took, said to him, he could not be what he said he was, and must go about his business.

The second prince set out soon afterwards on the same errand; and when he came to the golden road, and his horse had set one foot upon it, he stopped to look at it, and thought it very beautiful, and said to himself, "What a pity it is that anything should tread here!" Then he too turned aside and rode on the left side of it. But when he came to the gate the guards said he was not the true prince, and that he too must go away about his business; and away he went.

Now when the full year was come round, the third brother left the forest in which he had lain hid for fear of his father's anger, and set out in search of his betrothed bride. So he journeyed on, thinking of her all the way, and rode so quickly that he did not even see what the road was made of, but went with his horse straight over it; and as he came to the gate it flew open, and the princess welcomed him with joy, and said he was her deliverer, and should now be her husband and lord of the kingdom. When the first joy at their meeting was over, the princess told him she had heard of his father having forgiven him, and of his wish to have him home again: so, before his wedding with the princess, he went to visit



his father, taking her with him. Then he told him everything; how his brothers had cheated and robbed him, and yet that he had borne all these wrongs for the love of his father. And the old king was very angry, and wanted to punish his wicked sons; but they made their escape, and got into a ship and sailed away over the wide sea, and where they went to nobody knew and nobody cared.

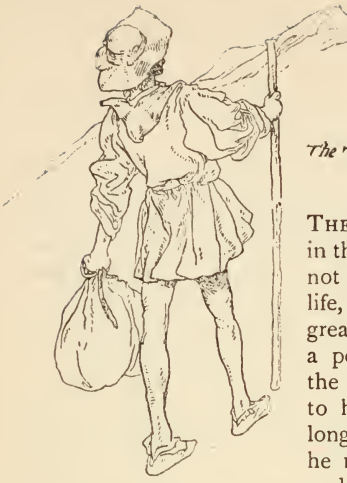
And now the old king gathered together his court, and asked all his kingdom to come and celebrate the wedding of his son and the princess. And young and old, noble and squire, gentle and simple, came at once on the summons; and among the rest came the friendly dwarf, with the sugarloaf hat, and a new scarlet cloak.

"And the wedding was held, and the merry bells rung,
And all the good people they danced and they sung,
And feasted and frolick'd I can't tell how long."



A Dwarf from Sweden was the next to be invited to the stool, and sitting down he began to tell how a troll was enabled to do a kindly service to a poor lad who had saved him from a fierce werewolf.

"My story," he said, "shall be called



The Troll's Hammer

THERE was once a great famine in the country; the poor could not procure the necessaries of life, and even the rich suffered great privation. At that time a poor peasant dwelt out on the heath. One day he said to his son, that he could no longer support him, and that he must go out in the world, and provide for himself. Niels, therefore, left home and wandered forth.

Towards evening he found himself in a large forest, and climbed up into a tree, lest the wild beasts might do him harm during the night. When he had slept about an hour or perhaps more, a little man came running towards the tree. He was hunch-backed, had crooked legs, a long beard, and a red cap on his head. He was pursued by a werewolf, which attacked him just under the tree in which Niels was sitting. The little man began to scream; he bit and scratched, and defended himself as well as he could, but all to no purpose, the werewolf was his master, and would have torn him in pieces, if Niels had not sprung down from the tree, and come to his assistance. As soon as the werewolf saw that he had two to contend with, he was afraid, and fled back into the forest.

The Troll then said to Niels: "Thou hast preserved my life, and done me good service; in return I will also give thee something that will be beneficial to thee. See! here is a hammer, and all the smith's work which thou doest with it, no one shall be able to equal. Continue thy way, and things will go better than thou thinkest. When the Troll had spoken these words, he sank into the ground before Niels.

The next day the boy wandered on, until he came to the neighbourhood of the royal palace, and here he engaged himself to a smith.

Now it just happened, that a few days previously a thief had broken into the king's treasury and stolen a large bag of money. All the smiths in the city were, therefore, sent for to the palace, and the king promised that he who could make the best and securest lock, should be appointed court locksmith, and have a considerable reward into the bargain. But the lock must be finished in eight days, and so constructed that it could not be picked by any one.

When the smith, with whom Niels lived, returned home and related this, the boy thought he should like to try whether his hammer really possessed those qualities which the Troll had said. He therefore begged his master to allow him to make a lock, and promised that it should be finished by the appointed time. Although the smith had no great opinion of the boy's ability, he, nevertheless, allowed him to make the trial. Niels then requested to have a separate workshop, locked himself in, and then began hammering the iron. One day went, and then another, and the master began to be inquisitive; but Niels let no one come in, and the smith was obliged to remain outside, and peep through the keyhole. The work, however, succeeded far better than the boy himself had expected; and, without his really knowing how it came to pass, the lock was finished on the evening of the third day.

The following morning he went down to his master and asked him for some money. "Yesterday I worked hard," said he, "and to-day I will make myself merry." Hereupon he went out of the city, and did not return to the workshop till late in the evening. The next day he did the same, and idled away the rest of the week. His master was, consequently, very angry, and threatened to turn him away, unless he finished his work at the appointed time. But Niels told him to be quite easy, and engaged that his lock should be the best. When the



day arrived, Niels brought his work forth, and carried it up to the palace, and it appeared that his lock was so ingenious and delicately made, that it far excelled all the others. The consequence was, that Niels' master was acknowledged as the most skilful, and received the promised office and reward.

The smith was delighted, but he took good care not to confess to any one who it was that had made the curious lock. He now received one work after another from the king, and let Niels do them all, and he soon became a wealthy man.

In the meantime, the report spread from place to place of the ingenious lock the king had got for his treasury. Travellers came from a great distance to see it, and it happened that a foreign king came also to the palace. When he had examined the work for a long time, he said, that the man who could make such a lock deserved to be honoured and respected. "But however good a smith he may be," added the king, "I have got his master at home." He continued boasting in this manner, till at length the king offered to wager with him which could execute the most skilful piece of workmanship. The smiths were sent for, and the two kings determined that each smith should make a knife. He who won was to have a considerable reward. The smith related to Niels what had passed, and desired him to try whether he could not make as good a knife as he had a lock. Niels promised that he would, although his last work had not benefited him much. The smith was in truth an avaricious man, and treated him so niggardly, that at times he had not enough to eat and drink.

It happened one day, as Niels was gone out to buy steel to make the knife, that he met a man from his own village, and, in the course of conversation, learnt from him that his father went begging from door to door, and was in great want and misery. When Niels heard this he asked his master for some money to help his father; but his master answered, that he should not have a shilling

before he had made the knife. Hereupon Niels shut himself up in the workshop, worked a whole day, and, as on the former occasion, the knife was made without his knowing how it happened.

When the day arrived on which the work was to be exhibited, Niels dressed himself in his best clothes, and went with his master up to the palace, where the two kings were expecting them. The strange smith first showed his knife. It was so beautiful, and so curiously wrought, that it was a pleasure to look at it; it was, moreover, so sharp and well tempered, that it could cut through a millstone to the very centre, as if it had been only a cheese, and that without the edge being in the least blunted. Niels' knife, on the contrary, looked very poor and common. The king already began to think he had lost his wager, and spoke harshly to the master-smith, when his boy begged leave to examine the stranger's knife a little more closely. After having looked at it for some time, he said: "This is a beautiful piece of workmanship which you have made, and shame on those who would say otherwise; but my master is, nevertheless, your superior, as you shall soon experience." Saying this, he took the stranger's knife and split it lengthwise from the point to the handle with his own knife, as easily as one splits a twig of willow. The kings could scarcely believe their eyes; and the consequence was, that the Danish smith was declared the victor, and got a large bag of money to carry home with him.

When Niels asked for payment, his master refused to give him anything, although he well knew that the poor boy only wanted the money to help his father. Upon this Niels grew angry, went up to the king, and related the whole story to him, how it was he who had made both the lock and the knife. The master was now called, but he denied everything, and accused Niels of being an idle boy, whom he had taken into his service out of charity and compassion.

"The truth of this story we shall soon find out," said

the king, who sided with the master. "Since thou sayest it is thou who hast made this wonderful knife, and thy master says it is he who has done it, I will adjudge each of you to make a sword for me within eight days. He who can make the most perfect one shall be my master-smith; but he who loses, shall forfeit his life."

Neils was well satisfied with this agreement. He went home, packed up all his things, and bade his master farewell. The smith was now in great straits, and would gladly have made all good again; but Niels appeared not to understand him, and went his way, and engaged with another master, where he cheerfully began to work on the sword.

When the appointed day arrived, they both met at the palace, and the master produced a sword of the most elaborate workmanship that any one could wish to see, besides being inlaid with gold, and set with precious stones. The king was greatly delighted with it.

"Now, little Niels," said he, "what dost thou say to this sword?"

"Certainly," answered the boy, "it is not so badly made as one might expect from such a bungler."

"Canst thou show anything like it?" asked the king.

"I believe I can," answered Niels.

"Well, produce thy sword; where is it?" said the king.

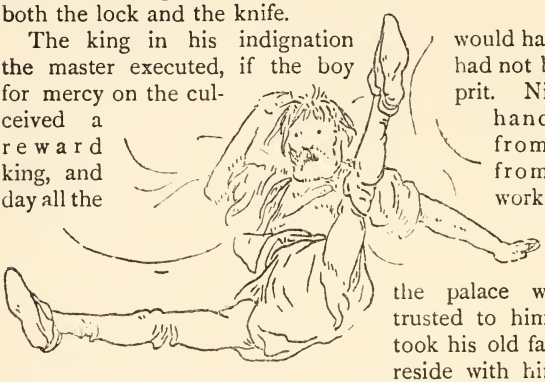
"I have it in my waistcoat pocket," replied Neils.

Hereupon there was a general laugh, which was increased when they saw the boy take a little packet out of his waistcoat pocket. Niels opened the paper, in which the blade was rolled up like a watch-spring. "Here is my work," said he, "will you just cut the thread, master?"

The smith did it willingly, and in a moment the blade straightened itself and struck him in the face.

Neils took out of his other pocket a hilt of gold, and screwed it fast to the blade; then presented the sword to the king; and all present were obliged to confess that they never before had seen such matchless workmanship.

Niels was unanimously declared the victor, and the master was obliged to acknowledge that the boy had made both the lock and the knife.



The king in his indignation would have had the master executed, if the boy had not begged for mercy on the culprit. Niels received a handsome reward from the king, and from that day all the work from the palace was intrusted to him. He took his old father to reside with him, and lived in competence and happiness till his death.

When the Swedish Troll had gone back to his place after telling with much self-satisfaction how one of his fellows had befriended the poor apprentice, a Norwegian fairy came forward to tell how three of her companions had similarly served a young princess, and she named her story





The three little Crones, each with Something big

THERE was once a king's son and a king's daughter who dearly loved each other. The young princess was good and fair, and well spoken of by all, but her disposition was more inclined to pleasure and dissipation than to handiworks and domestic occupations. To the old queen this appeared very wrong, and she said she would have no one for a daughter-in-law that was not as skilled in such matters as she herself had been in her youth. She therefore opposed the prince's marriage in all sorts of ways.

As the queen would not recall her words, the prince went to her and said, it would be well to make a trial whether the princess were not as skilful as the queen herself. This seemed to every one a very rash proposal, seeing that the prince's mother was a very diligent, laborious person, and span and sewed and wove both night and day, so that no one ever saw her like. The prince, however, carried his point; the fair princess was sent into the maiden's bower, and the queen sent her a pound of flax to spin. But the flax was to be spun ere

dawn of day, otherwise the damsel was never more to think of the prince for a husband.

When left alone the princess found herself very ill at ease; for she well knew that she could not spin the queen's flax, and yet trembled at the thought of losing the prince, who was so dear to her. She therefore wandered about the apartment and wept, incessantly wept. At this moment the door was opened very softly, and there stepped in a little, little woman of singular appearance and yet more singular manners. The little woman had enormously large feet, at which every one who saw her must be wonderstruck. She greeted the princess with: "Peace be with you!" "And peace with you!" answered the princess. The old woman then asked: "Why is the fair damsel so sorrowful to-night?" The princess answered: "I may well be sorrowful. The queen has commanded me to spin a pound of flax: if I have not completed it before dawn, I lose the young prince whom I love so dearly." The old woman then said: "Be of good cheer, fair maiden; if there is nothing else, I can help you; but then you must grant me a request which I will name." At these words the princess was overjoyed, and asked what it was the old woman desired. "I am called," she said, "Mother Bigfoot; and I require for my aid no other reward than to be present at your wedding. I have not been at a wedding since the queen your mother-in-law stood as bride." The princess readily granted her desire, and they parted. The princess then lay down to sleep, but could not close her eyes the whole livelong night.

Early in the morning, before dawn, the door was opened, and the little woman again entered. She approached the king's daughter and handed to her a bundle of yarn, as white as snow and as fine as a cobweb, saying, "See! such beautiful yarn I have not spun since I span for the queen, when she was about to be married; but that was long, long ago." Having so spoken the little woman disappeared, and the princess fell into a refreshing slumber

But she had not slept long when she was awakened by the old queen, who was standing by her bed, and who asked her whether the flax were all spun. The princess said that it was, and handed the yarn to her. The queen must needs appear content, but the princess could not refrain from observing that her apparent satisfaction did not proceed from good-will.

Before the day was over, the queen said she would put the princess to yet another proof. For this purpose she sent the yarn to the maiden-bower together with a yarn-roll and other implements, and ordered the princess to weave it into a web; but which must be ready before sunrise; if not, the damsel must never more think of the young prince.

When the princess was alone, she again felt sad at heart; for she knew that she could not weave the queen's yarn, and yet less reconcile herself to the thought of losing the prince to whom she was so dear. She therefore wandered about the apartment and wept bitterly. At that moment the door was opened softly, softly, and in stepped a very little woman, of singular figure and still more singular manners. The little woman had an enormously large back, so that every one who saw her must be struck with astonishment. She, too, greeted the princess with: "Peace be with you!" and received for answer: "Peace with you!" The old woman said: "Why is the fair damsel so sad and sorrowful?" "I may well be sorrowful," answered the princess. "The queen has commanded me to weave all this yarn into a web; and if I have not completed it by the morning before sunrise, I shall lose the prince, who loves me so dearly." The woman then said: "Be comforted, fair damsel; if it is nothing more, I will help you. But then you must consent to one condition, which I will name to you." At these words the princess was highly delighted, and asked what the condition might be. "I am called Mother Bigback, and I desire no other reward than to be at your wedding. I have not been to any wedding since the queen your

mother-in-law stood as bride." The king's daughter readily granted this request, and the little woman departed. The princess then lay down to sleep, but was unable to close her eyes the whole night.

In the morning, before daybreak, the door was opened and the little woman entered. She approached the princess, and handed to her a web white as snow and close as a skin, so that its like was never seen. The old woman said: "See! such even threads I have never woven since I wove for the queen, when she was about to be married; but that was long, long ago." The woman then disappeared, and the princess fell into a short slumber, but from which she was roused by the old queen, who stood by her bed, and inquired whether the web were ready. The princess told her that it was, and handed to her the beautiful piece of weaving. The queen must now appear content for the second time; but the princess could easily see that she was not so from good-will.

The king's daughter now flattered herself that she should be put to no further trial; but the queen was of a different opinion; for she shortly after sent the web down to the maiden-bower with the message, that the princess should make it into shirts for the prince. The shirts were to be ready before sunrise, otherwise the damsel must never hope to have the young prince for a husband.

When the princess was alone, she felt sad at heart; for she knew that she could not sew the queen's web, and yet could not think of losing the king's son, to whom she was so dear. She therefore wandered about the chamber, and shed a flood of tears. At this moment, the door was softly, softly opened, and in stepped a very little woman of most extraordinary appearance and still more extraordinary manners. The little woman had an enormously large thumb, so that every one who saw it must be wonder-struck. She also greeted the princess with: "Peace be with you," and likewise received for answer: "Peace with you." She then asked the young damsel why she was so sad and lonely. "I may well be sad," answered the

princess. "The queen has commanded me to make this web into shirts for the king's son; and if I have not finished them to-morrow before sunrise, I shall lose my beloved prince, who holds me so dear." The woman then said: "Be of good cheer, fair maiden; if it is nothing more, I can help you. But then you must agree to a condition, which I will mention." At these words the princess was overjoyed, and asked the little woman what it was she wished. "I am," answered she, "called Mother Bigthumb, and I desire no other reward than that I may be present at your wedding. I have not been at a wedding since the queen your mother-in-law stood as bride." The princess willingly assented to this condition, and the little woman departed. But the princess lay down to sleep, and slept so soundly that she did not dream even once of her dear prince.

Early in the morning, before the sun had risen, the door was opened, and the little woman entered. She approached the bed, awakened the princess, and gave her some shirts that were sewed and stitched so curiously that their like was never seen. The old woman said: "See! so beautifully as this I have not sewn since I sewed for the queen, when she was about to stand as bride. But that was long, long ago." With these words the little woman disappeared; for the queen was then at the door, being just come to inquire whether the shirts were ready. The king's daughter said that they were, and handed her the beautiful work. At the sight of them the queen was so enraged that her eyes flashed with fury. She said: "Well! take him then. I could never have imagined that thou wast so clever as thou art." She then went her way, slamming the door after her.

The king's son and the king's daughter were now to be united, as the queen had promised, and great preparations were made for the wedding. But the joy of the princess was not without alloy, when she thought of the singular guests that were to be present. When some time had elapsed, and the wedding was being celebrated in the good

old fashion, yet not one of the little old women appeared; although the bride looked about in every direction. At length, when it was growing late, and the guests were going to table, the princess discerned the three little women, as they sat in a corner of the dining hall, at a table by themselves. At the same moment the king stepped up to them, and inquired who they were, as he had never seen them before. The eldest of the three answered: "I am called Mother Bigfoot, and have such large feet because I have been obliged to sit spinning so much in my time." "Oho!" said the king, "if such be the consequence, my son's wife shall never spin another thread." Then turning to the second little woman, he inquired the cause of her uncommon appearance. The old woman answered: "I am called Mother Bigback, and am so broad behind because I have been obliged to sit weaving so much in my time." "Oho!" said the king, "then my son's wife shall weave no more." Lastly, turning to the third old woman, he asked her name; when Mother Bigthumb, rising from her seat, told him that she had got so large a thumb because she had sewed so much in her time. "Oho!" said the king, "then my son's wife shall never sew





another stitch." Thus the fair princess obtained the king's son, and also escaped from spinning, and weaving, and sewing for all the rest of her life.

When the wedding was over, the three little women went their way, and no one knew whither they went, nor whence they came. The prince lived happy and content with his consort, and all passed on smoothly and peaceably; only the princess was not so industrious as her strict mother-in-law.

The fairies are always glad when people do not find out who it is that has benefited them,—for of course Mother Bigfoot, Mother Bigback, and Mother Bigthumb were really fairies in disguise,—and were therefore pleased at the end of the Norwegian fairy's tale.

"Now," said Titania, and of course her word was law, "I think I should like a song. Nymphidia, sing to us." Nymphidia at once stood up on the stool and all the Queen's maids of honour stood around it as they sang





The Queen's Song.

Round about, round about, in a fine ring-a:
Thus we dance, thus we dance, and thus we sing-a:
Trip and go, to and fro, over this green-a,
All about, in and out, for our brave queen-a.

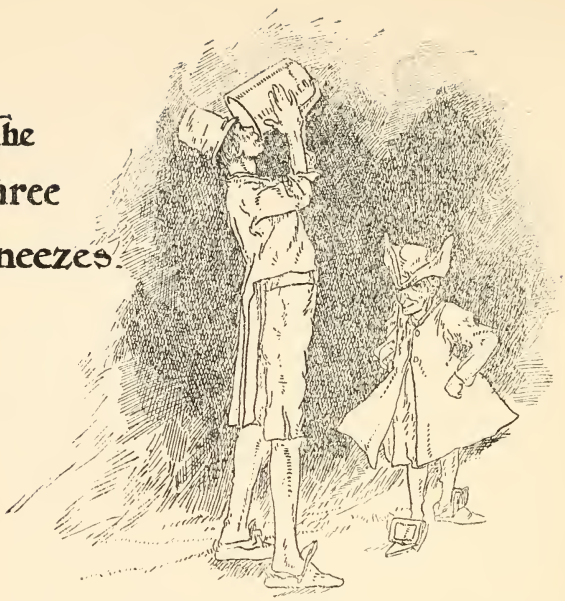
Round about, round about, in a fine ring-a:
Thus we dance, thus we dance, and thus we sing-a:
Trip and go, to and fro, over this green-a,
All about, in and out, for our brave queen-a.

We have danc'd round about in a fine ring-a:
We have danced lustily, and thus we sing-a,
All about, in and out, over this green-a,
To and fro, trip and go, to our brave queen-a.

Nymphidia and all the maids of honour having sung this little song to their queen, Oberon thought it was time that Bottom should be made to tell a tale, and he, you may be sure, made a clumsy enough figure as he took his seat on the tale-teller's stool, scratched his head and said, "he didn't know any fairy tales." He tried to get away but could not rise until the King would let him; then when he did not begin quickly enough, Titania whispered to her maids of honour, and Hop, Mop and Drop, Pip, Drip and Skip, Tub, Tib and Tick, Pink, Pin and Quick, Gill, Om and Tit, Wap, Win and Mit all danced about poor Bottom, pinching and pulling and teasing him until he roared again and the whole fairy kingdom rang with peals of laughter. "Tell 'em about Billy MacDaniel," called out Flute, and without any preface Bottom at once began telling the story of



The Three Sneezes



Billy MacDaniel was once as likely a young man as ever shook his brogue at a patron, emptied a quart, or handled a shillelagh; fearing for nothing but the want of drink; caring for nothing but who should pay for it; and thinking of nothing but how to make fun over it: drunk or sober, a word or a blow was ever the way with Billy MacDaniel; and a mighty easy way it is of either getting into or of ending a dispute. More is the pity that, through the means of his thinking, and fearing, and caring for nothing, this same Billy MacDaniel fell into bad company; for surely the good people are the worst of all company any one could come across.

It so happened that Billy was going home one clear frosty night not long after Christmas; the moon was round and bright; but although it was as fine a night as heart could wish for, he felt pinched with the cold. "By my word," chattered Billy, "a drop of good liquor would be no bad

thing to keep a man's soul from freezing in him; and I wish I had a full measure of the best."

"Never wish it twice, Billy," said a little man in a three-cornered hat, bound all about with gold lace and with great silver buckles in his shoes, so big that it was a wonder how he could carry them, and he held out a glass as big as himself, filled with as good liquor as ever eye looked on or lip tasted.

"Success, my little fellow," said Billy MacDaniel, nothing daunted, though well he knew the little man to belong to the good people; "here's your health, any way, and thank you kindly; no matter who pays for the drink"; and he took the glass and drained it to the very bottom without ever taking a second breath to it.

"Success," said the little man; "and you're heartily welcome, Billy; but don't think to cheat me as you have done others,—out with your purse and pay me like a gentleman."

"Is it I pay you?" said Billy; "could I not just take you up and put you in my pocket as easily as a blackberry."

"Billy MacDaniel," said the little man, getting very angry, "you shall be my servant for seven years and a day, and that is the way I will be paid; so make ready to follow me."

When Billy heard this he began to be very sorry for having used such bold words towards the little man; and he felt himself, yet could not tell how, obliged to follow the little man the livelong night about the country, up and down, and over hedge and ditch, and through bog and brake without any rest.

When morning began to dawn, the little man turned round to him and said, "You may now go home, Billy, but on your peril don't fail to meet me in the Fort-field to-night; or if you do it may be the worse for you in the long-run. If I find you a good servant you will find me an indulgent master."

Home went Billy MacDaniel; and though he was tired

and weary enough, never a wink of sleep could he get for thinking of the little man; but he was afraid not to do his bidding, so up he got in the evening, and away he went to the Fort-field. He was not long there before the little man came towards him and said, "Billy, I want to go a long journey to-night; so saddle one of my horses, and you may saddle another for yourself, as you are to go along with me, and may be tired after your walk last night."

Billy thought this very considerate of his master, and thanked him accordingly: "But," said he, "if I may be so bold, sir, I would ask which is the way to your stable, for never a thing do I see but the fort here, and the old thorn tree in the corner of the field, and the stream running at the bottom of the hill, with the bit of bog over against us."

"Ask no questions, Billy," said the little man, "but go over to that bit of bog, and bring me two of the strongest rushes you can find."

Billy did accordingly, wondering what the little man would be at; and he picked out two or three of the stoutest rushes he could find, with a little bunch of brown blossom stuck at the side of each, and brought them back to his master.

"Get up, Billy," said the little man, taking one of the rushes from him and striding across it.

"Where shall I get up, please your honour?" said Billy.

"Why, upon horseback, like me, to be sure," said the little man.

"Is it after making a fool of me you'd be," said Billy, "bidding me get a horse-back upon that bit of a rush? Maybe you want to persuade me that the rush I pulled but while ago out of the bog over there is a horse?"

"Up! Up! and no words," said the little man, looking very angry; "the best horse you ever rode was but a fool to it." So Billy, thinking all this was in joke, and fearing to vex his master, straddled across the rush. "Borram! Borram! Borram!" cried the little man three times (which, in English, means to become great), and Billy did

the same after him: presently the rushes swelled up into fine horses, and away they went full speed; but Billy, who had put the rush between his legs, without much minding



how he did it, found himself sitting on horseback the wrong way, which was rather awkward, with his face to the horse's tail; and so quickly had his steed started off with him that he had no power to turn round, and there was therefore nothing for it but to hold on by the tail.

At last they came to their journey's end, and stopped at the gate of a fine house: "Now, Billy," said the little man,

"do as you see me do, and follow me close; but as you did not know your horse's head from his tail, mind that your own head does not spin round until you can't tell whether you are standing on it or on your heels: for remember that old liquor, though able to make a cat speak, can make a man dumb."

The little man then said some queer kind of words, out of which Billy could make no meaning; but he contrived to say them after him for all that; and in they both went through the key-hole of the door, and through one key-hole after another, until they got into the wine cellar, which was well-stored with all kinds of wine.

The little man fell to drinking as hard as he could, and Billy, no way disliking the example, did the same. "The best of masters are you, surely," said Billy to him; "no matter who is the next; and well pleased will I be with your service if you continue to give me plenty to drink."

"I have made no bargain with you," said the little man, "and will make none; but up and follow me."

Away they went through key-hole after key-hole; and each mounting upon the rush which he left at the hall door, scampered off, kicking the clouds before them like snowballs, as soon as the words, "Borram, Borram, Borram," had passed their lips.

When they came back to the Fort-field, the little man dismissed Billy, bidding him be there the next night at the same hour. Thus did they go on, night after night, shaping their course one night here, and another night there—sometimes north, and sometimes east, and sometimes south, until there was not a gentleman's wine-cellar in all Ireland they had not visited and could tell the flavour of every wine in it as well—ay, better than the butler himself.

One night when Billy MacDaniel met the little man as usual in the Fort-field, and was going to the bog to fetch the horses for their journey, his master said to him, "Billy, I shall want another horse to-night, for maybe we may bring back more company than we take." So Billy, who now knew better than to question any order given to him by his

master, brought a third rush much wondering who it might be that would travel back in their company, and whether he was about to have a fellow-servant. "If I have," thought Billy, "he shall go and fetch the horses from the bog every night; for I don't see why I am not, every inch of me, as good a gentleman as my master."

Well, away they went, Billy leading the third horse, and never stopped until they came to a snug farmer's house in the county Limerick, close under the old castle of Carrigogunniel, that was built they say, by the great Brian Boru. Within the house there was great carousing going forward, and the little man stopped outside for some time to listen; then turning round all of a sudden said, "Billy, I will be a thousand years old to-morrow."

"God bless us, sir," said Billy, "will you?"

"Don't say these words again, Billy," said the little man, "or you will be my ruin for ever. Now, Billy, as I will be a thousand years in the world to-morrow, I think it is full time for me to get married."

"I think so too, without any kind of doubt at all," said Billy, "if ever you mean to marry."

"And to that purpose," said the little man, "have I come all the way to Carrigogunniel; for in this house, this very night, is young Darby Riley going to be married to Bridget Rooney; and as she is a tall and comely girl and has come of decent people, I think of marrying her myself and taking her off with me."

"And what will Darby Riley say to that?" said Billy.

"Silence," said the little man, putting on a mighty severe look: "I did not bring you here with me to ask questions;" and without holding further argument, he began saying the queer words which had the power of passing him through the key-hole as free as air, and which Billy thought himself mighty clever to be able to say after him.

In they both went; and for the better viewing the company, the little man perched himself up as nimbly as a cock sparrow upon one of the big beams which went across

the house over all their heads, and Billy did the same upon another facing him; but not being much accustomed to roosting in such a place, his legs hung down as untidy as may be, and it was quite clear he had not taken pattern after the way in which the little man had bundled himself up together. If the little man had been a tailor all his life he could not have sat more contentedly upon his haunches.

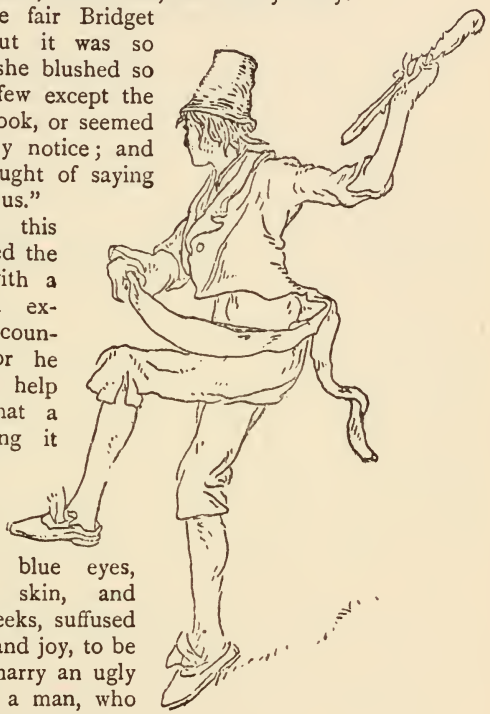
There they were, both master and man, looking down upon the fun that was going forward; and under them were the priest and piper, and the father of Darby Riley, with Darby's two brothers and his uncle's son; and they were both the father and the mother of Bridget Rooney, and proud enough the old couple were that night of their daughter, as good right they had; and her four sisters, with bran new ribbons in their caps, and her three brothers all looking as clean and as clever as any three boys in Munster, and there were uncles and aunts, and gossips and cousins enough besides to make a full house of it; and plenty was there to eat and drink on the table for every one of them, if they had been double the number.

Now it happened, just as Mrs Rooney had helped his reverence to the first cut of the pig's head which was placed before her, beautifully bolstered up with white savoys, that the bride gave a sneeze, which made every one at table start, but no one said, "God bless us." All thinking that the priest would have done so, as he ought if he had done his duty, no one wished to take the word out of his mouth, which unfortunately was pre-occupied with pig's head and greens. And after a moment's pause the fun and merriment of the bridal feast went on without the pious benediction.

Of this circumstance both Billy and his master were no inattentive spectators from their exalted stations. "Ha," exclaimed the little man, throwing one leg from under him with a joyous flourish, and his eye twinkled with a strange light, whilst his eyebrows became elevated into the curvature of Gothic arches—"Ha," said he, leering down at the

bride, and then up at Billy, "I have half of her now, surely. Let her sneeze out twice more, and she is mine, in spite of priest, mass-book, and Darby Riley."

Again the fair Bridget sneezed; but it was so gently, and she blushed so much, that few except the little man took, or seemed to take, any notice; and no one thought of saying "God bless us."



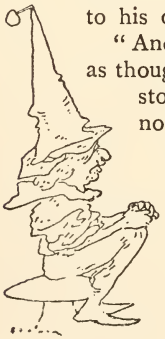
Billy all this time regarded the poor girl with a most rueful expression of countenance; for he could not help thinking what a terrible thing it was for a nice young girl of nineteen, with large blue eyes, transparent skin, and dimpled cheeks, suffused with health and joy, to be obliged to marry an ugly little bit of a man, who was a thousand years old barring a day.

At this critical moment the bride gave a third sneeze, and Billy roared out with all his might, "God save us." Whether this exclamation resulted from his soliloquy, or from the mere force of habit, he never could tell exactly himself; but no sooner was it uttered than the little man, his face glowing with rage and disappointment, sprung from

the beam on which he had perched himself, and shrieking out in the voice of a cracked bagpipe, "I discharge you from my service, Billy MacDaniel—take *that* for your wages," gave poor Billy a most furious kick in the back, which sent his unfortunate servant sprawling upon his face and hands right in the middle of the supper table.

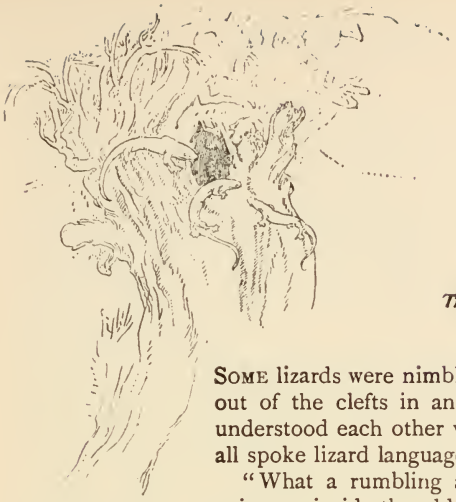
If Billy was astonished, how much more so was every one of the company into which he was thrown with so little ceremony. But when they heard his story, Father Cooney laid down his knife and fork, and married the young couple out of hand with all speed; and Billy MacDaniel danced the Rinka at their wedding, and plenty did he drink at it too, which was what he thought more of than dancing.

Bottom was mighty glad when his story was over, for he did not like the feeling that he could not get up from the stool when he tried, and he did not like to hear how small a voice he was speaking in; he would have liked to speak big and show what a great fellow he was in that queer company, but there he sat unable to move, and roaring as gently as any sucking dove to use his own words. As soon as he had got to the last word of his story he found that he could get up and off he floundered to his companions.



"Another *fairy* this time," said King Oberon, as though he had not altogether relished Bottom's story; "the Danish Elves have told us nothing yet."

At this, which was of course equal to a command, a Danish Elf came forward, seated himself and began to tell about



The Elf Hill.

Some lizards were nimbly running in and out of the clefts in an old tree. They understood each other very well, for they all spoke lizard language.

"What a rumbling and grumbling is going on inside the old Elf-hill," said one of the lizards. "I have not closed my eyes for the last two nights for the noise. I might just as well be having toothache, for all the sleep I get!"

"There is something up inside," said the other lizard. "They propped up the top of the hill on four red posts till cockcrow this morning, to air it out thoroughly; and the elf maidens have been learning some new dancing steps, which they are always practising. There certainly must be something going on."

"Yes, I was talking to an earthworm of my acquaintance about it," said the third lizard. "He came straight up out of the hill, where he had been boring into the earth for days and nights. He had heard a good deal, for the miserable creature can't see, but it can feel its way, and plays the part of eavesdropper to perfection. They are expecting visitors in the Elf-hill, grand visitors; but who they are the earthworm refused to say or perhaps he did not know. All the will-o'-the-wisps are ordered for a procession of torches, as it is called; and the silver and gold plate, of which there is any amount in the hill, is all being polished up and put out in the moonlight."

"Whoever can the strangers be?" said all the lizards together.

"What on earth is happening? Hark! what a humming and buzzing!"

At this moment the Elf-hill opened, and an elderly elf-maiden tripped out. She was hollow behind, but otherwise quite attractively dressed. She was the old elf-king's housekeeper, and a distant relative. She wore an amber heart upon her forehead. She moved her legs at a great pace, "trip, trip." Good heavens! how fast she tripped over the ground; she went right down to the night-jar in the swamp.

"You are invited to the Elf-hill for to-night," she said to him. "But will you be so kind as to charge yourself with the other invitations. You must make yourself useful in other ways, as you don't keep house yourself. We are going to have some very distinguished visitors, goblins, who always have something to say, and so the old elf-king means to show what he can do."

"Who is to be invited?" asked the night-jar.

"Well, everybody may come to the big ball, even human beings, if they can only talk in their sleep, or do something else after our fashion. But the choice is to be strictly limited for the grand feast. We will only have the most distinguished people. I have had a battle with the Elf-king about it; because I hold that we mustn't even include ghosts. The merman and his daughters must be invited first. I don't suppose they care much about coming on dry land, but I shall see that they each have a wet stone to sit on, or something better; so I expect they won't decline this time. All the old demons of the first-class, with tails, the River-god, and the wood-sprites. And then I don't think we can pass over the Grave-pig, the Hell-horse, and the Church-grim, although they belong to the clergy, who are not of our people; but that is merely on account of their office, and they are closely connected with us, and visit us very frequently."

"Croak," said the night-jar, and he flew off to issue the invitations.

The elf-maidens had already begun to dance, and they danced a scarf-dance, with scarves woven of mist and moonshine; these have a lovely effect to those who care for that kind of thing. The great hall in the middle of the Elf-hill had been thoroughly polished up for the occasion. The floor was washed with moonshine, and the walls were rubbed over with witches' fat, and this made them shine with many colours, like a tulip petal. The kitchen was full of frogs on spits, stuffed snake skins, and salads of toad-stool spawn, mouse snouts and hemlock. Then there was beer brewed by the marsh witch, and sparkling saltpetre wine from the vaults. Everything of the best, and rusty nails and church window panes among the kickshaws.

The old Elf-king had his golden crown polished with pounded slate-pencil, ay, and it was a head-boy's slate-pencil too, and they are not so easy to get. They hung up fresh curtains in the bedroom, and fixed them with the slime of snails. Yes, indeed, there was a humming and a buzzing.

"Now we will fumigate, with horse-hair and pig's bristles, and then I can do no more!" said the old elf-servant.

"Dear father!" said the youngest of the daughters, "are you not going to tell me who these grand strangers are?"

"Well, well," he said, "I suppose I must tell you now. Two of my daughters must prepare themselves to be married,—two will certainly make marriages. The old Trold chieftain from Norway, that lives on the Dovrefield among his many rock castles and fastnesses and gold works, which are better than you would expect, is coming down here with his two sons. They are coming to look for wives. The old Trold is a regular honest Norwegian veteran, straightforward and merry. I used to know him in the olden days, when we drank to our good fellowship. He came here to fetch a wife, but she is dead now. She was a daughter of the king of the chalk cliffs at Möen. As the saying is, 'he took his wife on the chalk,' that is,

bought her on tick. I am quite anxious to see the old fellow. The sons, they say, are a pair of overgrown, ill-mannered cubs; but perhaps they are not so bad; I dare-say they will improve as they grow older. See if you can't lick them into shape a bit."

"And when do they come?" asked one of the daughters.

"That depends upon wind and weather," said the Elf-king. "They travel economically, and they will take their chance of a ship. I wanted them to come round by Sweden, but the old fellow can't bring himself to that yet. He doesn't march with the times, but I don't hold with that!"

At this moment two will-o'-the-wisps came hopping along, one faster than the other, so of course one arrived before the other.

"They are coming, they are coming!" they cried.

"Give me my crown, and let me stand in the moon-light," said the Elf-king.

The daughters raised their scarves and curtseyed to the ground.

There stood the Trold chieftain from the Dovrefield; he wore a crown of hardened icicles and polished fir-cones, and besides this, he had on a bear-skin coat and snow-shoes. His sons, on the other hand, had bare necks and wore no braces, because they were strong men.

"Is that a hill?" asked the youngest of the brothers, pointing to the Elf-hill. "We should call it a hole in Norway."

"Lads!" cried the old man, "holes go inwards, hills go upwards? Haven't you got eyes in your heads?"

The only thing that astonished them, they said, was that they understood the language without any trouble.

"Don't make fools of yourselves," said the old man; "one might think you were only half baked."

Then they went into the Elf-hill, where the company was of the grandest, although they had been got together in such a hurry; you might almost say they had been blown together. It was all charming, and arranged to suit every-one's taste. The merman and his daughters sat at table in

great tubs of water, and said it was just like being at home. Everybody had excellent table manners, except the two young Norwegian Trolds; they put their feet up on the table, but then they thought anything they did was right.

"Take your feet out of the way of the dishes," said the old Trold, and they obeyed him, but not at once. They tickled the ladies they took in to dinner with fir-cones out of their pockets; then they pulled off their boots, so as to be quite comfortable, and handed the boots to the ladies to hold. Their father the old Trold chieftain, was very different; he told no end of splendid stories about the proud Norwegian mountains, and the waterfalls dashing down in white foam with a roar like thunder. He told them about the salmon leaping up against the rushing water, when the nixies played with golden harps. Then he went on to tell them about the sparkling winter nights when the sledge bells rang and the lads flew over the ice with blazing lights, the ice which was so transparent that you could see the startled fish darting away under your feet. Yes, indeed, he could tell stories, you could see and hear the things he described; the saw mills going, the men and maids singing their songs and dancing the merry Halling dance. Huzza! All at once the old Trold gave the elf housekeeper a smacking kiss, such a kiss it was, and yet they were not a bit related. Then the elf-maidens had to dance, first plain dancing, and then step dancing, and it was most becoming to them. Then came a fancy dance.

Preserve us, how nimble they were on their legs, you couldn't tell where they began or where they ended, you couldn't tell which were arms and which were legs, they were all mixed up together like shavings in a saw-pit. They twirled round and round so often that it made the Hell-horse feel quite giddy and unwell and he had to leave the table.

"Prrrrr!" said the old Trold. "There is some life in those legs, but what else can they do besides dancing and pointing their toes and all those whirligigs?"

"We will soon shew you!" said the Elf-king, and he called out his youngest daughter; she was thin and

transparent as moonshine, and was the most ethereal of all the daughters. She put a little white stick in her mouth and vanished instantly; this was her accomplish ment.

But the Trold said he did not like that accomplishment in a wife, nor did he think his boys would appreciate it. The second one could walk by her own side as if she had a shadow, and no elves have shadows.

The third was quite different; she had studied in the marsh witches' brewery, and understood larding alder stumps with glow-worms.

"She will be a good housewife," said the Trold, and then he saluted her with his eyes instead of drinking her health, for he did not want to drink too much.

Now came the turn of the fourth; she had a big golden harp to play, and when she touched the first string everybody lifted up their left legs (for all the elfin folk are left legged). But when she touched the second string everybody had to do what she wished.

"She is a dangerous woman!" said the Trold, but both his sons left the hill, for they were tired of it all.

"And what can the next daughter do?" asked the old Trold.

"I have learnt to like the Norwegians," she said, "and I shall never marry unless I can go to Norway!"

But the smallest of the sisters whispered to the Trold, "that is only because she once heard a song which said that when the world came to an end, the rocks of Norway would still stand, and that is why she wants to go there, she is so afraid of being exterminated."

"Ho, ho!" said the Trold, "so that slipped out. But what can the seventh do?"

"The sixth comes before the seventh," said the Elf-king, for he could reckon, but she would not come forward.

"I can only tell people the truth," she said. "Nobody cares for me, and I have enough to do in making my winding sheet."



"Now came the seventh and last, what could she do? Well she could tell stories as many as ever she liked.

"Here are my five fingers," said the old Trold, "tell me a story for each one."

The elf-maiden took hold of his wrist, and he chuckled and laughed, till he nearly choked. When she came to the fourth finger, which had a gold ring on it, as if it knew there was to be a betrothal, the Trold said, "Hold fast what you have got, the hand is yours, I will have you for a wife myself!" The elf-maiden said that the stories about Guldbrand, the fourth finger, and little Peter Playman, the fifth, had not yet been told.

"Never mind, keep those till winter. Then you shall tell us about the fir, and the birch, and the fairy gifts, and the tingling frost. You shall have every opportunity of telling us stories; nobody up there does it yet. We will sit in the Stone Hall, where the pine logs blaze, and drink mead out of the golden horns of the old Norwegian kings. The river god gave me a couple. When we sit there the mountain sprite comes to pay us a visit, and he will sing you the songs of the Sæter girls. The salmon will leap in the waterfalls, and beat against the stone wall, but it won't get in. Ah, you may believe me when I say that we lead a merry life there in good old Norway. But where are the lads?"

Yes, where were the lads? They were running about the fields, blowing out the will-o'-the-wisps, who came so willingly for the torchlight procession.

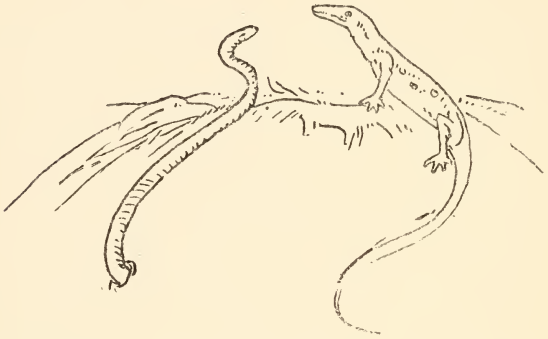
"Why do you gad about out there?" said the Trold. "I have taken a mother for you, now you can come and take one of the aunts."

But the lads said they would rather make a speech, and drink toasts; they had no wish to marry. Then they made their speeches, and drank toasts and tipped their glasses up to shew that they had emptied them. After that they pulled off their coats and went to sleep on the table, to show that they were quite at home. But the old Trold danced round and round the room with his

young bride, and exchanged boots with her, which was grander than exchanging rings.

"There is the cock crowing!" said the old housekeeper. "Now we must shut the shutters, so that the sun may not burn us up."

Then the hill closed up. But the lizards went on running up and down the clefts of the tree; and they



said to each other, "Ah, how much I liked the old Trold."

"I liked the boys better," said the earthworm, "but then it couldn't see, poor, miserable creature that it was."

"That reminds me of another story," said the French Fay, who had already told one story, but was evidently ready and willing to tell another.

"We don't want to hear two stories that are like each other," said King Oberon.

"Please your Majesty it is not like that which the Danish Elf has just told, only his one reminded me of mine," answered the Fay.

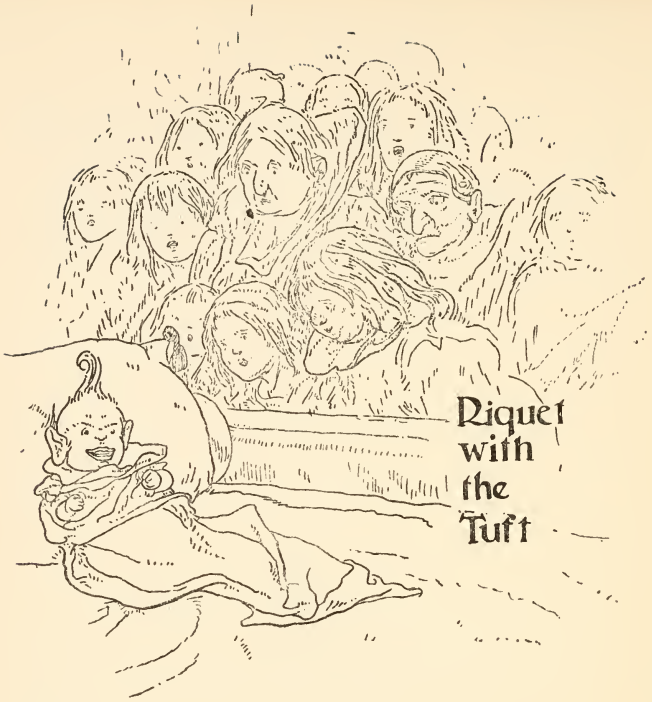
"What is it about?" enquired the Queen who remembered how much she had liked the dainty little creature's first tale.

"It is a story showing how that which is ugly may become beautiful through love," readily responded the French Fay.

"Let us hear it," said Oberon, "if my Titania wishes it."

Titania having answered that she certainly *did* wish it, the Fay sprang lightly to the stool and began telling the pretty little love story of





Once upon a time there was a Queen who had a son, so ugly and misshapen, that it was doubted for a long time whether his form was really human. A fairy, who was present at his birth, affirmed, nevertheless, that he would be worthy to be loved, as he would have an excellent wit; she added, moreover, that by virtue of the gift she had bestowed upon him, he would be able to impart equal intelligence to the one whom he loved best. All this was some consolation to the poor Queen, who was much distressed at having brought so ugly a little monkey into the world. It is true that the child was no sooner able to speak than he said a thousand pretty things, and that in all his ways there was a certain air of intelligence, with which everyone was charmed. I had forgotten to say that

he was born with a little tuft of hair on his head, and so he came to be called Riquet with the Tuft; for Riquet was the family name.

About seven or eight years later, the Queen of a neighbouring kingdom had two daughters. The elder was fairer than the day, and the Queen was so delighted, that it was feared some harm might come to her from her great joy. The same fairy who had assisted at the birth of little Riquet, was present upon this occasion, and in order to moderate the joy of the Queen, she told her that this little Princess would have no gifts of mind at all, and that she would be as stupid as she was beautiful. The Queen was greatly mortified on hearing this, but, shortly after, she was even more annoyed, when her second little daughter was born and proved to be extremely ugly. "Do not distress yourself, madam," said the fairy to her, "your daughter will find compensation, for she will have so much intelligence, that her lack of beauty will scarcely be perceived."

"Heaven send it may be so," replied the Queen; "but are there no means whereby a little more understanding might be given to the elder, who is so lovely?" "I can do nothing for her in the way of intelligence, madam," said the fairy, "but everything in the way of beauty; as, however, there is nothing in my power I would not do to give you comfort, I will bestow on her the power of conferring beauty on any man or woman who shall please her." As these two Princesses grew up, their endowments also became more perfect, and nothing was talked of anywhere but the beauty of the elder, and the intelligence of the younger. It is true that their defects also greatly increased with their years. The younger became uglier every moment, and the elder more stupid every day. She either made no answer when she was spoken to, or else said something foolish. With this she was so clumsy, that she could not even place four pieces of china on a mantelshelf, without breaking one of them, or drink a glass of water, without spilling half of it on her dress. Notwithstanding the attraction of beauty, the younger, in whatever society they might be, nearly

always bore away the palm from her sister. At first everyone went up to the more beautiful, to gaze at and admire her; but they soon left her for the cleverer one, to listen to her many pleasant and amusing sayings; and people were astonished to find that in less than a quarter of an hour, the elder had not a soul near her, while all the company had gathered round the younger. The elder, though very stupid, noticed this, and would have given, without regret, all her beauty, for half the sense of her sister. Discreet as she was, the Queen could not help often reproaching her with her stupidity, which made the poor Princess ready to die of grief.

One day, when she had gone by herself into a wood, to weep over her misfortune, she saw approaching her, a little man of very ugly and unpleasant appearance, but magnificently dressed. It was the young Prince Riquet with the Tuft, who, having fallen in love with her from seeing her portraits, which were sent all over the world, had left his father's kingdom that he might have the pleasure of beholding her and speaking to her. Enchanted at meeting her thus alone, he addressed her with all the respect and politeness imaginable. Having remarked, after paying her the usual compliments, that she was very melancholy, he said to her, "I cannot understand, madam, how a person so beautiful as you are can be so unhappy as you appear; for, although I can boast of having seen an infinite number of beautiful people, I can say with truth that I have never seen one whose beauty could be compared with yours."

"You are pleased to say so, sir," replied the Princess, and there she stopped.

"Beauty," continued Riquet, "is so great an advantage, that it ought to take the place of every other, and, possessed of it, I see nothing that can have power to afflict one."

"I would rather," said the Princess, "be as ugly as you are, and have intelligence, than possess the beauty I do, and be so stupid as I am."

"There is no greater proof of intelligence, madam, than the belief that we have it not; it is the nature of that gift, that the more we have, the more we believe ourselves to be without it."

"I do not know how that may be," said the Princess, "but I know well enough that I am very stupid, and that is the cause of the grief that is killing me."

"If that is all that troubles you, madam, I can easily put an end to your sorrow."

"And how would you do that?" said the Princess.

"I have the power, madam," said Riquet with the Tuft, "to give as much intelligence as it is possible to possess, to the person whom I love best; as you, madam, are that person, it will depend entirely upon yourself, whether or not you become gifted with this amount of intelligence, provided that you are willing to marry me."

The Princess was struck dumb with astonishment, and replied not a word.

"I see," said Riquet with the Tuft, "that this proposal troubles you, and I am not surprised, but I will give you a full year to consider it."

The Princess had so little sense, and at the same time was so anxious to have a great deal, that she thought the end of that year would never come; so she at once accepted the offer that was made her. She had no sooner promised Riquet with the Tuft that she would marry him that day twelve months, than she felt herself quite another person.

She found she was able to say whatever she pleased, with a readiness past belief, and of saying it in a clever, but easy and natural manner. She immediately began a sprightly and well-sustained conversation with Riquet with the Tuft, and was so brilliant in her talk, that Riquet with the Tuft began to think he had given her more wit than he had reserved for himself. On her return to the palace, the whole Court was puzzled to account for a change so sudden and extraordinary; for the number of foolish things which they had been accus-

tomed to hear from her, she now made as many sensible and exceedingly witty remarks. All the Court was in a state of joy not to be described. The younger sister alone was not altogether pleased, for, having lost her superiority over her sister in the way of intelligence, she now only appeared by her side as a very unpleasing-looking person.

The King now began to be guided by his elder daughter's advice, and at times even held his Council in her apartments. The news of the change of affairs was spread abroad, and all the young princes of the neighbouring kingdoms exerted themselves to gain her affection, and nearly all of them asked her hand in marriage. She found none of them, however, intelligent enough to please her, and she listened to all of them, without engaging herself to one.

At length arrived a Prince, so rich and powerful, so clever and so handsome, that she could not help listening willingly to his addresses. Her father, having perceived this, told her that he left her at perfect liberty to choose a husband for herself, and that she had only to make known her decision. As the more intelligence we possess, the more difficulty we find in making up our mind on such a matter as this, she begged her father, after having thanked him, to allow her time to think about it.

She went, by chance, to walk in the same wood in which she had met Riquet with the Tuft, in order to meditate more uninterruptedly over what she had to do. While she was walking, deep in thought, she heard a dull sound beneath her feet, as of many persons running to and fro, and busily occupied. Having listened more attentively, she heard one say, "Bring me that saucepan;" another, "Give me that kettle;" another, "Put some wood on the fire." At the same moment the ground opened, and she saw beneath her what appeared to be a large kitchen, full of cooks, scullions, and all sorts of servants necessary for the preparation of a magnificent banquet. There came forth a band of about twenty to



thirty cooks, who went and established themselves in an avenue of the wood, at a very long table, and who, each with the larding-pin in his hand and the tail of his fur cap over his ear, set to work, keeping time to a harmonious song.

The Princess, astonished at this sight, asked the men for whom they were working.

"Madam," replied the chief among them, "for Prince Riquet with the Tuft, whose marriage will take place to-morrow." The Princess, still more surprised than she was before, and suddenly recollecting that it was just a twelvemonth from the day on which she had promised to marry Prince Riquet with the Tuft, was overcome with trouble and amazement. The reason of her not having remembered her promise was, that when she made it she had been a very foolish person, and when she became gifted with the new mind that the Prince had given her, she had forgotten all her follies.

She had not taken another thirty steps, when Riquet with the Tuft presented himself before her, gaily and splendidly attired, like a Prince about to be married. "You see, madam," said he, "I keep my word punctually, and I doubt not that you have come thither to keep yours, and to make me, by the giving of your hand, the happiest of men."

"I confess to you, frankly," answered the Princess, "that I have not yet made up my mind on that matter, and that I do not think I shall ever be able to do so in the way you wish." "You astonish me, madam," said Riquet with the Tuft. "I have no doubt I do," said the Princess; "and assuredly, had I to deal with a stupid person, with a man without intelligence, I should feel greatly perplexed. 'A Princess is bound by her word,' he would say to me, 'and you must marry me, as you have promised to do so.' But as the person to whom I speak is, of all men in the world, the one of greatest sense and understanding, I am certain he will listen to reason. You know that, when I was no better than a

fool, I nevertheless could not decide to marry you—how can you expect, now that I have the mind which you have given me, and which renders me much more difficult to please than before, that I should take to-day a resolution which I could not then? If you seriously thought of marrying me, you did very wrong to take away my stupidity, and so enable me to see more clearly than I saw then." "If a man without intelligence," replied Riquet with the Tuft, "who reproached you with your breach of promise, might have a right, as you have just intimated, to be treated with indulgence, why would you, madam, that I should receive less consideration in a matter which affects the entire happiness of my life? Is it reasonable that persons of intellect should be in a worse position than those that have none? Can you assert this—you who have so much, and who so earnestly desired to possess it? But let us come to the point, if you please. Setting aside my ugliness, is there anything in me that displeases you? Are you dissatisfied with my birth, my understanding, my temper, or my manners?"

"Not in the least," replied the Princess; "I admire in you everything you have mentioned."

"If that is so," rejoined Riquet with the Tuft, "I shall soon be happy, as you have it in your power to make me the most pleasing looking of men."

"How can that be done?" asked the Princess.

"It can be done," said Riquet with the Tuft, "if you love me sufficiently to wish that it should be. And, in order, madam, that you should have no doubt about it, know that the same fairy, who, on the day I was born, endowed me with the power to give intelligence to the person I chose, gave you also the power to render handsome the man you should love, and on whom you should wish to bestow this favour."

"If such be the fact," said the Princess, "I wish, with all my heart, that you should become the handsomest and most lovable Prince in the world, and I bestow the gift on you to the fullest extent in my power."

The Princess had no sooner pronounced these words than Riquet with the Tuft appeared to her eyes, of all men in the world, the handsomest, the best made, and most attractive she had ever seen. There are some who assert that it was not the spell of the fairy, but love alone that caused the metamorphosis. They say that the Princess, having reflected on the perseverance of her lover, on his prudence, and on all the good qualities of his heart and mind, no longer saw the deformity of his body, or the ugliness of his features; that his hump appeared to her nothing more than a good-natured shrug of his shoulders, and that instead of noticing, as she had done, how badly he limped, she saw in him only a certain lounging air, which charmed her. They say also that his eyes, which squinted, only seemed to her the more brilliant for this; and that the crookedness of his glance was to her merely expressive of his great love; and, finally, that his great red nose had in it, to her mind, something martial and heroic. However this may be, the Princess promised on the spot to marry him, provided he obtained the consent of the King, her father. The King, having learned that his daughter entertained a great regard for Riquet with the Tuft, whom he knew also to be a very clever and wise Prince, received him with pleasure as his son-in-law. The wedding took place the next morning, as Riquet with the Tuft had foreseen, and according to the orders which he had given a long time before.



No beauty, no talent, has power above
Some indefinite charm discern'd only
by love.

"That is delightful, but it is *much* too short," said Titania smilingly.

"It is better too short than too long," answered Oberon, "but perhaps the pretty little story-teller has another one for us?"

"If your Majesties wish it," replied the dainty creature.

"Let it be a longer one this time," said Titania, "and let it be another tale of true love, *please*."

The French Fay considered for a moment, and then said, as if to herself, "I *do* know another story of true love rewarded after strange adventures, but I'm afraid it will be too long for his Majesty's taste."

"This one is for *me*," said Titania, turning smilingly to the King, "and my Oberon need not listen if he does not wish to."

"Be it as my Queen wishes," said Oberon, who was really excited by the promise of hearing of strange adventures.

Then there was a sort of dainty rustling as of the breeze toying with the summer leaves while all the fairies about the circle settled comfortably down to listen to the long story which the French Fay named





The Benevolent Frog.

THERE was once a King who for many years had been engaged in a war with his neighbours; a great number of battles had been fought, and at last the enemy laid siege to his capital. The King, fearing for the safety of the Queen, begged her to retire to a fortified castle, which he himself had never visited but once. The Queen endeavoured, with many prayers and tears, to persuade him to allow her to remain beside him and to share his fate, and it was with loud cries of grief that she was put into her chariot by the King to be driven away. He ordered his guards, however, to accompany her, and promised to steal away when possible to visit her. He tried to comfort her with this hope, although he knew that there was little chance of fulfilling it, for the castle stood a long distance off, surrounded by a thick forest, and only those who were well acquainted with the roads could possibly find their way to it.

The Queen parted from her husband, broken-hearted at leaving him exposed to the dangers of war; she travelled by easy stages, in case the fatigue of so long a journey should make her ill; at last she reached the castle, feeling low-spirited and distressed. When sufficiently rested, she walked about the surrounding country, but found nothing

to interest her or divert her thoughts. She saw only far-spreading desert tracts on either side, which gave her more pain than pleasure to look upon; sadly she gazed around her, exclaiming at intervals, "What a contrast between this place and that in which I have lived all my life! If I stay here long I shall die! To whom have I to talk in these solitudes? With whom can I share my troubles? What have I done to the King that he should banish me? He wishes me, it seems, to feel the full bitterness of our separation, by exiling me to this miserable castle."

Thus she lamented; and although the King wrote daily to her, and sent her good news of the progress of the siege, she grew more and more unhappy, and at last determined that she would return to him. Knowing, however, that the officers who were in attendance upon her had received orders not to take her back, unless the King sent a special messenger, she kept her design secret, but ordered a small chariot to be built for her, in which there was only room for one, saying that she should like sometimes to accompany the hunt. She drove herself, and followed so closely on the hounds, that the huntsmen were left behind; by this means she had sole command of her chariot, and could get away whenever she liked. Her only difficulty was her ignorance of the roads that traversed the forest; but she trusted to the kindness of Providence to bring her safely through it. She gave word that there was to be a great hunt, and that she wished everybody to be there; she herself would go in her chariot, and each was to follow a different route, that there might be no possibility of escape for the wild beasts. Everything was done according to her orders. The young Queen, feeling sure that she should soon see her husband again, dressed herself as becomingly as possible; her hat was covered with feathers of different colours, the front of her dress lavishly trimmed with precious stones, and her beauty, which was of no ordinary kind, made her seem, when so adorned, a second Diana.

While everybody was occupied with the pleasures of the hunt, she gave rein to her horses, encouraged them with voice and whip, and soon their quickened pace became a gallop; then, taking the bit between their teeth, they flew along at such a speed, that the chariot seemed borne by the winds, and the eye could scarcely follow it. Too late the poor Queen repented of her rashness: "What could I have been thinking of?" she said. "How could I have imagined that I should be able to control such wild and fiery horses? Alas! what will become of me? What would the King do if he knew the great danger I am in, he who loves me so dearly, and who only sent me away that I might be in greater safety! This is my gratitude for his tender care!" The air resounded with her piteous lamentations; she invoked Heaven, she called the fairies to her assistance, but it seemed that all the powers had abandoned her. The chariot was overthrown; she had not sufficient strength to jump quickly enough to the ground, and her foot was caught between the wheel and the axle-tree; it was only by a miracle she was saved.

She remained stretched on the ground at the foot of a tree; her heart scarcely beat, she could not speak, and her face was covered with blood. She lay thus for a long time; when at last she opened her eyes, she saw, standing near her, a woman of gigantic stature, clothed only in a lion's skin, with bare arms and legs, her hair tied up with the dried skin of a snake, the head of which dangled over her shoulders; in her hand was a club made of stone, which served her as a walking-stick, and a quiver full of arrows was fastened to her side. When the Queen caught sight of this extraordinary figure, she felt sure that she was dead, for she did not think it was possible that she could be alive after such a terrible accident, and she said in a low voice to herself, "I am not surprised that it is so difficult to resolve to die, since what is to be seen in the other world is so frightful." The giantess, who overheard her words, could not help laughing at the Queen's idea that she was dead. "Take courage," she said to her,

"for know that you are still among the living; but your fate is none the less sad. I am the Fairy Lioness, whose dwelling is near here; you must come and live with me." The Queen looked sorrowfully at her, and said, "If you will be good enough, Madam Lioness, to take me back to



my castle, and tell the King what ransom you demand, he loves me so dearly, that he will not refuse you even the half of his kingdom." "No," replied the giantess, "I am rich enough, but for some time past my lonely life has seemed dull to me; you are intelligent, and will be able perhaps to amuse me." As she finished speaking, she took the form of a lioness, and placing the Queen on her back, she carried her to the depths of her cave, and there rubbed her with a spirit which quickly healed the Queen's wounds. But what surprise and misery for the Queen to find herself in this dreadful abode! It was only reached by ten thousand steps, which led down to the centre of the earth; there was no light but that shed by a number of tall lamps, which were reflected in a lake of quicksilver.

This lake was covered with monsters, each hideous enough to have frightened a less timid queen; there were owls, screech-owls, ravens, and other birds of ill omen, filling the air with discordant sounds; in the distance could be seen rising a mountain whence flowed the sluggish waters of a stream composed of all the tears shed by unhappy lovers, from the reservoirs of their sad loves. The trees were bare of leaves and fruit, the ground covered with marigolds, briars, and nettles.

The food corresponded to the climate of this miserable country; for a few dried roots, some horse-chestnuts, and thorn-apples, were all that was provided by the Fairy Lioness to appease the hunger of those who fell into her hands.

As soon as the Queen was well enough to begin work, the fairy told her she could build herself a hut, as she was going to remain with her for the rest of her life. On hearing this, the Queen could no longer restrain her tears: "Alas, what have I done to you," she cried, "that you should keep me here? If my death, which I feel is near, would give you pleasure, I pray you, kill me, it is all the kindness I dare hope from you; but do not condemn me to pass a long and melancholy life apart from my husband."

The Lioness only scoffed at her, and told her that the best thing she could do was to dry her tears, and try to please her; that if she acted otherwise, she would be the most miserable person in the world.

"What must I do then," replied the Queen, "to soften your heart?" "I am fond of fly-pasties," said the Lioness. "You must find means of procuring a sufficient number of flies to make me a large and sweet-tasting one." "But," said the Queen, "I see no flies here, and even were there any, it is not light enough to catch them; and if I were to catch some, I have never in my life made pastry, so that you are giving me orders which it is impossible for me to execute." "No matter," said the pitiless Lioness; "that which I wish to have, I will have."

The Queen made no reply: she thought to herself, in

spite of the cruel fairy, that she had but one life to lose, and in the condition in which she then was, what was there to fear in death? Instead, therefore, of going in search of flies, she sat herself down under a yew tree, and began to weep and complain: "Ah, my dear husband, what grief will be yours, when you go to the castle to fetch me, and find I am not there; you will think that I am dead, or faithless, and I would rather that you should mourn the loss of my life, than that of my love; perhaps someone will find the remains of my chariot in the forest, and all the ornaments which I took with me to please you; and when you see these, you will no longer doubt that death has taken me; and how can I tell that you will not give to another the heart's love which you have shared with me? But, at least, I shall not have the pain of knowing this, since I am not to return to the world." She would have continued communing thus with herself for a long time, if she had not been interrupted by the dismal croaking of a raven above her head. She lifted her eyes, and by the feeble light saw a large raven with a frog in its bill, and about to swallow it. "Although I see no help at hand for myself," she said, "I will not let this poor frog perish if I can save it; it suffers as much in its way, as I do in mine, although our conditions are so different," and picking up the first stick she could find, she made the raven drop its prey. The frog fell to the ground, where it lay for a time half-stunned, but finally recovering its froggish senses, it began to speak, and said: "Beautiful Queen, you are the first benevolent person that I have seen since my curiosity first brought me here." "By what wonderful power are you enabled to speak, little Frog?" responded the Queen, "and what kind of people do you see here? for as yet I have seen none." "All the monsters that cover the lake," replied the little Frog, "were once in the world; some on thrones, some in high positions at court; there are even here some royal ladies, who caused much strife and bloodshed; it is they whom you see changed into leeches;

their fate condemns them to be here for a time, but none of those who come return to the world better or wiser." "I can well understand," said the Queen, "that many wicked people together do not help to make each other better; but you, my little Frog friend, what are you doing here?" "It was curiosity which led me here," she replied. "I am half a fairy, my powers are restricted with regard to certain things, but far-reaching in others; if the Fairy Lioness knew that I was in her dominions, she would kill me."

"Whether fairy or half-fairy," said the Queen, "I cannot understand how you could have fallen into the raven's clutches and been nearly eaten." "I can explain it in a few words," replied the Frog. "When I have my little cap of roses on my head, I fear nothing, as in that resides most of my power; unfortunately, I had left it in the marsh, when that ugly raven pounced upon me; if it had not been for you, madam, I should be no more; and as you have saved my life, you have only to command, and I will do all in my power to alleviate the sorrows of your own." "Alas! dear Frog," said the Queen, "the wicked fairy who holds me captive wishes me to make her a fly-pasty; but there are no flies here; if there were any, I could not see in the dim light to catch them; I run a chance, therefore, of being killed by her blows."

"Leave it to me," said the Frog. "I will soon get you some." Whereupon the Frog rubbed herself over with sugar, and more than six thousand of her frog friends did likewise; then they repaired to a place where the fairy kept a large store of flies, for the purpose of tormenting some of her unhappy victims. As soon as they smelt the sugar, they flew to it, and stuck to the frogs, and these kind helpers returned at a gallop to the Queen. There had never been such a fly-catching before, nor a better pasty, than that the Queen made for the fairy. The latter was greatly surprised when the Queen handed it to her, and could not imagine how she had been clever enough to catch the flies.

The Queen, finding herself exposed to the inclemencies of the poisonous atmosphere, cut down some cypress branches, wherewith to build herself a hut. The Frog generously offered her services, and putting herself at the head of all those who had gone to collect the flies, they helped the Queen to build as pretty a little tenement as the world could show. Scarcely, however, had she laid herself down to rest, than the monsters of the lake, jealous of her repose, came round her hut, and nearly drove her distracted, by setting up a noise, more hideous than any ever heard before.

She rose in fear and trembling and fled from the house: this was exactly what the monsters desired. A dragon, who had formerly been a tyrant of one of the finest states of the Universe, immediately took possession of it.

The poor Queen tried to complain of the ill-treatment, but no one would listen to her; the monsters laughed and hooted at her, and the Fairy Lioness told her that if she came again to deafen her with lamentations, she would give her a sound thrashing. She was forced, therefore, to hold her tongue, and to have recourse to the Frog, who was the kindest body in the world. They wept together; for as soon as she put on her cap of roses, the Frog was able to laugh or weep like anyone else. "I feel such an affection for you," she said to the Queen, "that I will re-build your house, even though I drive all the monsters of the lake to despair." She immediately cut some wood, and the little rustic palace of the Queen was so quickly reared, that she was able to sleep in it that night. The Frog, who thought of everything that was necessary for the Queen's comfort, made her a bed of wild thyme. When the wicked fairy found out that the Queen did not sleep on the ground, she sent for her: "What gods or men are they who protect you?" she asked. "This land, watered only by showers of burning sulphur, has never produced even a leaf of sage; I am told, nevertheless, that sweet-smelling herbs spring up beneath your feet!"

"I cannot explain it, madam," said the Queen, "unless the cause is due to the child I hope one day to have, who will perhaps be less unhappy than I am."

"What I now wish for," said the fairy, "is a bunch of the rarest flowers; see if this coming happiness you speak of will obtain these for you. If you fail to get them, blows will not fail to follow, for these I often give, and know well how to administer." The Queen began to cry; such threats as these were anything but pleasant to her, and she was in despair at the thought of the impossibility of finding flowers.

She went back to her little house; her friend the Frog came to her: "How unhappy you are!" she said to the Queen. "Alas! who would not be so, dear friend? The fairy has ordered a bunch of the most beautiful flowers, and where am I to find them? You see what sort of flowers grow here; my life, nevertheless, is at stake, if I do not procure them for her." "Dear Queen," said the Frog in tender tones, "we must try our best to get you out of this difficulty. There lives a bat in this neighbourhood, the only one with whom I have made acquaintance; she is a good creature, and moves more quickly than I can; I will give her my cap of roses, and aided by this, she will be able to find you the flowers." The Queen made a low curtsey: for there was no possible way of embracing the Frog. The latter went off without delay to speak to the bat; a few hours later she returned, bearing under her wings the most exquisite flowers. The Queen hurried off with them to the fairy, who was more overcome by surprise than before, unable to understand in what miraculous way the Queen received help.

Meanwhile the Queen was continually thinking by what means she could escape. She confided her longing to the Frog, who said to her, "Madam, allow me first to consult my little cap, and we will then arrange matters according to its advice." She took her cap, placed it on some straw, and then burned in front of it a few sprigs of juniper, some capers, and two green peas; she then croaked five

times, and the ceremony being completed put on her cap again, and began speaking like an oracle. "Fate, the ruler of all things, forbids you to leave this place. You will have a little Princess, more beautiful than Venus herself; do not trouble yourself about anything else, time alone can comfort you." The Queen's head drooped, a few tears fell from her eyes, but she resolved to trust her friend: "At least," she said to her, "do not leave me here alone; and befriend me when my little one is born." The Frog promised to remain with her, and comforted her as best she could.

But it is now time to return to the King. While the enemy kept him shut up in his capital, he could not continually send messengers to the Queen. At last, however, after several sorties, he obliged the besiegers to retire, and he rejoiced at his success less on his own account, than on that of the Queen, whom he could now bring back in safety. He was in total ignorance of the disaster which had befallen her, for none of his officers had dared to tell him of it. They had been into the forest and found the remains of the chariot, the runaway horses, and the driving apparel which she had put on when going to find her husband. As they were fully persuaded that she was dead, and had been eaten by wild beasts, their only care was to make the King believe that she had died suddenly. On receiving this mournful intelligence, he thought he should die of grief; he tore his hair, he wept many tears, and gave vent to his bereavement in every imaginable expression of sorrow, cries, sobs, and sighs. For some days he would see no one, nor allow himself to be seen; he then returned to his capital, and entered on a long period of mourning, to which the sorrow of his heart testified more sincerely than even his sombre garments of grief. All the surrounding kings sent their ambassadors charged with messages of condolence; and when the ceremonies, indispensable to these occasions, were over, he granted his subjects a period of peace, exempting them from military service,

and helping them, in every possible way, to improve their commerce.

The Queen knew nothing of all this. Meanwhile a little Princess had been born to her, as beautiful as the Frog had predicted, to whom they gave the name of Moufette. The Queen had great difficulty in persuading the fairy to allow her to bring up the child, for so ferocious



was she, that she would have liked to eat it. Moufette, a wonder of beauty, was now six months old; the Queen, as she looked upon her with a tenderness mingled with pity, continually said: "Ah! if your father could see you, my poor little one, how delighted he would be! how dear you would be to him! But even, already, maybe, he has begun to forget me; he believes, no doubt, that we are lost to him in death; and perhaps another fills the place in his heart, that once was mine."

These sorrowful reflections caused her many tears; the Frog, who truly loved her, seeing her cry like this, said to her one day: "If you would like me to do so, madam, I will go and find the King, your husband; the journey is long, and I travel but slowly; but, sooner or later, I shall hope to arrive." This proposal could not have been more warmly received than it was; the Queen clasped her hands,

and made Moufette clasp hers too, in sign of the gratitude she felt towards Madam Frog, for offering to undertake the journey. She assured her that the King also would not be ungrateful; "but," she continued, "of what use will it be to him to know that I am in this melancholy abode; it will be impossible for him to deliver me from it?" "Madam," replied the Frog, "we must leave that to Heaven; we can only do that which depends on ourselves."

They said good-bye to one another; the Queen sent a message to the King, written with her blood on a piece of rag; for she possessed neither ink nor paper. She begged him to give attention to everything the good Frog told him, and to believe all she said, as she was bringing him news of herself.

The Frog was a year and four days climbing up the ten thousand steps which lead from the dark country, in which she had left the Queen, up into the world; it took her another year to prepare her equipage, for she had too much pride to allow herself to appear at the Court like a poor, common frog from the marshes. She had a little sedan-chair made, large enough to hold two eggs comfortably; it was covered on the outside with tortoise-shell, and lined with lizard-skin; then she chose fifty maids of honour, these were the little green frogs which hop about the meadows; each was mounted on a snail, furnished with a light saddle, and rode in style with the leg thrown over the saddle-bow; several water-rats, dressed as pages, ran before the snails, as her body-guard; in short, nothing so pretty had ever been seen before, and to crown it all, her cap of crimson roses, always fresh and in full bloom, suited her in the most admirable manner. She was a bit of a coquette in her way, so she felt obliged to add a little rouge and a few patches; some said that she was painted as were many ladies of that country, but inquiries into the matter proved that this report had only been spread by her enemies.

The journey lasted seven years, during which time the poor Queen went through unspeakable pains and suffer-

ing, and if it had not been for the beautiful Moufette, who was a great comfort to her, she would have died a hundred times over. This wonderful little creature could not open her mouth or say a word, without filling her mother with delight; indeed, everybody, with the exception of the Fairy Lioness, was enchanted with her; at last, when the Queen had lived six years in this horrible place, the fairy said that, provided everything she killed was given to her, she might go hunting with her.

The joy of the Queen at once more seeing the sun may be imagined. So unaccustomed had she grown to its light, that at first she thought it would blind her. As for Moufette, she was so quick and intelligent, that even, at five or six years of age, she never failed to hit her mark, and so, in this way, the mother and daughter succeeded in somewhat lessening the ferocity of the fairy.

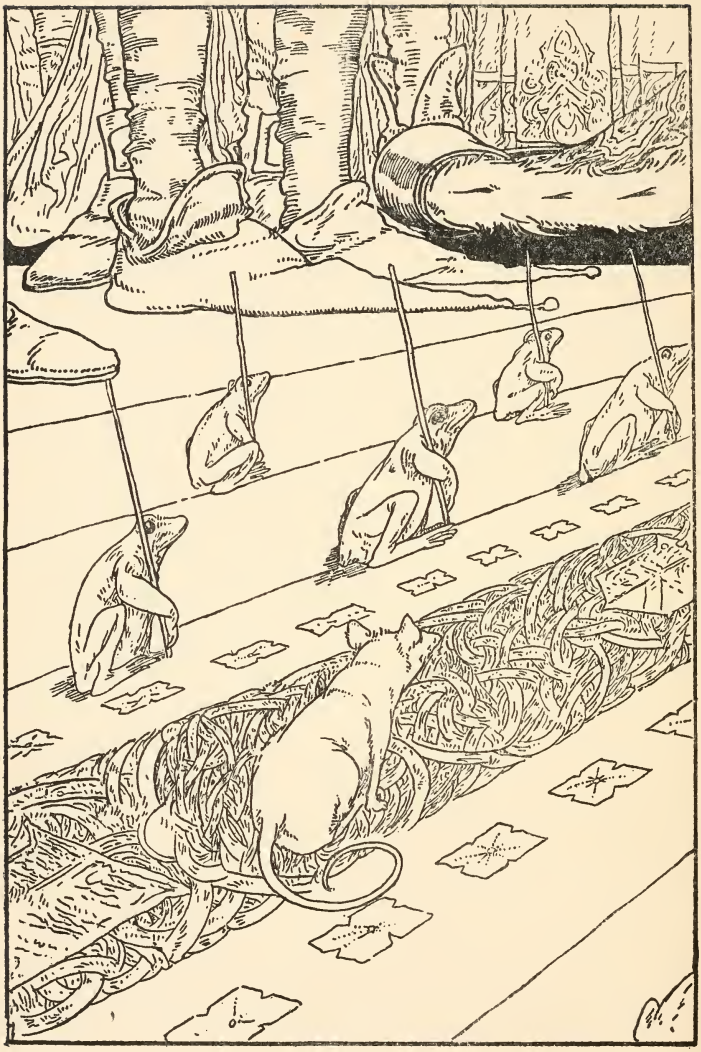
The Frog travelled over mountains and valleys, never stopping day or night; at last she drew near the capital, where the King was in residence. She was surprised to see dancing and festivity in every direction; there was laughter and singing, and the nearer she got to the town, the more joyous and jubilant the people seemed. Her equipage caused great astonishment, everyone went after it, and so large had the crowd become by the time she had reached the town, that she had great difficulty in making her way to the palace. Here everything was as magnificent as possible, for the King, who had been a widower for nine years, had at last yielded to the prayers of his subjects, and was on the eve of marriage with a Princess, less beautiful, it is true, than his wife, but not the less agreeable for that.

The kind Frog, having descended from her sedan-chair, entered the royal presence, followed by her attendants. She had no need to ask for audience, for the King, his affianced bride, and all the princes, were all much too curious to know the reason of her coming, to think of interrupting her. "Sire," said she, "I hardly know if the news I bring you will give you joy or sorrow; the

marriage which you are about to celebrate convinces me of your infidelity to the Queen."

"Her memory is dear to me as ever," said the King, unable to prevent the falling of a tear or two; "but you must know, kind frog, that kings are not always able to do what they wish; for the last nine years, my subjects have been urging me to marry; I owe them an heir to the throne, and I have therefore chosen this young Princess, who appears to me all that is charming." "I advise you not to marry her, for the Queen is not dead; I bring you a letter from her, written with her own blood. A little daughter, Moufette, has been born to you, more beautiful than the heavens themselves." The King took the rag, on which the Queen had scrawled a few words; he kissed it, he bathed it in his tears, he showed it to the whole assembly, saying that he recognised his wife's handwriting; he asked the Frog a thousand questions, which she answered with vivacity and intelligence.

The betrothed Princess, and the ambassadors who had come to be present at the marriage, began to pull long faces. One of the most important of the guests turned to the King, and said, "Sire, can you think of breaking so solemn an engagement, on the word of a toad like that? This scum of the marshes has the insolence to come and tell lies before the whole Court, for the pleasure of being heard!" "Know, your Excellency," replied the Frog, "that I am no scum of the marshes, and since I am forced to exhibit my powers: Come forth, fairies all!" And thereupon all the frogs, rats, snails, lizards, with the frog at their head, suddenly appeared; not, however, in the usual form of these reptiles, but with tall, majestic figures, pleasing countenances, and eyes more brilliant than stars; each wore a jewelled crown on his head, and over his shoulders a regal mantle of velvet, lined with ermine, with a long train which was borne by dwarfs. At the same time was heard the sound of trumpets, kettle-drums, hautboys, and drums, filling the air with melodious and warlike music, and all the fairies began to dance a ballet, their





every step so light, that the slightest spring lifted them to the vaulted ceiling of the room. The King and his future Queen, surprised as they were at this, were no less astonished, when they saw all these fairy ballet dancers suddenly change into flowers, jasmine, jonquils, violets, pinks, and tube roses, which still continued to dance as if they had legs and feet. It was like a living flower-bed, of which every movement delighted both the eye and the sense of smell. Another moment, and the flowers had disappeared ; in their place several fountains threw their waters into the air and fell into an artificial lake at the foot of the castle walls ; this was covered with little painted and gilded boats, so pretty and dainty that the Princess invited the ambassadors to go for a trip on the water. They were all pleased to do so, thinking it was all a merry pastime, which would end happily in the marriage festivities. But they had no sooner embarked, than the boats, water, and fountains disappeared, and the frogs were frogs again. The King asked what had become of the Princess ; the Frog replied, "Sire, no queen is yours, but your wife ; were I less attached to her than I am, I should not interfere ; but she is so deserving, and your daughter Moufette is so charming that you ought not to delay a moment in going to their deliverance." "I assure you, Madam Frog," said the King, "that if I did not believe my wife to be dead, there is nothing in the world I would not do to see her again." "After the wonders I have shown you," she replied, "it seems to me that you ought to be more convinced of the truth of what I have told you. Leave your kingdom in charge of trustworthy men, and start without delay. Here is a ring which will furnish you with the means of seeing the Queen, and of speaking with the Fairy Lioness, although she is the most terrible creature in the world."

The King departed, refusing to have anyone to accompany him, after making handsome presents to the Frog: "Do not be discouraged," she said to him ; "you will meet with terrible difficulties, but I hope that you will

succeed according to your wishes." Somewhat comforted by her words, the King started in search of his dear wife, with no other guide than his ring.

As Moufette grew older, her beauty became more perfect, and all the monsters of the quicksilver lake fell in love with her; and the dragons, with their hideous and terrifying forms, came and lay at her feet. Although Moufette had seen them ever since she was born, her beautiful eyes could not accustom themselves to the sight of these creatures, and she would run away and hide in her mother's arms. "Shall we remain here long?" she asked her; "is there to be no end to our misery?" The Queen spoke hopefully in order to cheer her child, but in her heart she had no hope; the absence of the Frog, her unbroken silence, the long time that had elapsed since she had news of the King, all these things filled her with sorrow and despair.

The Fairy Lioness had gradually made it a practice to take them with her hunting. She was fond of good things, and liked the game they killed for her, and although all they got in return was the gift of the head or the feet, it was something to be allowed to see again the light of day. The fairy took the form of a lioness, the Queen and her daughter seated themselves on her back, and thus they went hunting through the forests.

The King happened to be resting in a forest one day, whither his ring had guided him, and saw them pass like an arrow shot from the bow; he was unseen of them, and when he tried to follow them, they vanished completely from his sight. Notwithstanding the constant trouble she had been in, the Queen still preserved her former beauty; she appeared to her husband more charming than ever. He longed for her to return to him, and feeling sure that the young Princess who was with her was his dear little Moufette, he determined to face a thousand deaths, rather than abandon his design of rescuing her.

By the help of his ring, he found his way into the

obscure region where the Queen had been so many years; he was not a little surprised when he found himself descending to the centre of the earth, but every fresh thing he saw astonished him more and more. The Fairy Lioness, who knew everything, was aware of the day and the hour when he would arrive; she would have given a great deal if the powers in league with her had ordained otherwise; but she determined at least to oppose his strength with the full might of her own.

She built a palace of crystal, which floated in the centre of the lake of quicksilver, and rose and fell with its waves. In it she imprisoned the Queen and her daughter, and then harangued all the monsters who were in love with Moufette. "You will lose this beautiful Princess," she said to them, "if you do not help me to protect her from a knight who has come to carry her away." The monsters promised to leave nothing in their power undone; they surrounded the palace of crystal; the lightest in weight took their stations on the roof and walls; the others kept guard at the doors, and the remainder in the lake.

The King, advised by his faithful ring, went first to the Fairy's Cave; she was awaiting him in her form of lioness. As soon as he appeared she threw herself upon him; but he handled his sword with a valour for which she was not prepared, and as she was putting out one of her paws to fell him to the earth, he cut it off at the joint just where the elbow comes. She uttered a loud cry and fell over; he went up to her, put his foot on her throat and swore that he would kill her, and in spite of her ungovernable fury and invulnerability, she felt a little afraid. "What do you wish to do with me?" she asked. "What do you want of me?" "I wish to punish you," he replied proudly, "for having carried away my wife, and you shall give her up to me or I will strangle you on the spot." "Look towards the lake," she said, "and see if I have the power to do so." The King turned in the direction towards which she pointed, and saw the Queen and her daughter in the palace of crystal, which was floating like

a vessel, without oars or rudder, on the lake of quicksilver. He was ready to die with mingled joy and sorrow; he called to them with all his might, and they heard him, but how was he to reach them? While thinking over the means by which he might accomplish this, the Fairy Lioness disappeared. He ran round and round the lake, but whenever the palace came close enough to him, on one side or the other, for him to spring upon it, it suddenly floated away again with terrible swiftness, and so his hopes were continually disappointed. The Queen, fearing he would at length grow weary, called to him not to lose courage, that the Fairy Lioness wanted to tire him out, but that true love knew how to face all difficulties. She and Moufette then stretched out their hands towards him with imploring gestures. Seeing this, the King was filled with renewed courage, and raising his voice, he said that he would rather pass the remainder of his life in this melancholy region than go away without them. He needed great patience, for no king on earth ever spent such a wretched time before. He had only the ground, covered with briars and thorns, for his bed; his food consisted of wild fruits, more bitter than gall, and he was incessantly engaged in defending himself from the monsters of the lake.

Three years passed in this manner, and the King could not flatter himself that he had gained the least advantage; he was almost in despair, and over and over again was tempted to throw himself in the lake, and he would certainly have done so if he could have thought that by such a deed he might alleviate the sufferings of the Queen and the Princess. He was running one day as usual, first to one side of the lake then to the other, when one of the most hideous of the dragons called him, and said to him: "If you will swear to me by your crown and sceptre, by your royal mantle, by your wife and child, to give me, whenever I shall ask for it, a certain delicate morsel to eat, for which I have a taste, I will take you on my back, and I promise you that none of the monsters of this lake,

who guard the palace, shall prevent us from carrying off the Queen and Princess Moufette."

"Ah! my beloved Dragon!" cried the King, "I swear to you, and to all the family of dragons, that I will give you your fill to eat of what you like, and will for ever remain your humble servant." "Do not make any promises," replied the Dragon, "if you have any thought of not fulfilling them; for, in that case, misfortunes will fall upon you that you will not forget as long as you live." The King renewed his protestations; he was dying of impatience to get possession of his dear Queen. He mounted on the Dragon's back, as if it was the finest horse in the world, but the other monsters now advanced to bar his passage. They fought together, nothing was to be heard but the sharp hissings of the serpents, nothing to be seen but fire, and sulphur, and saltpetre, falling in every direction. At last the King reached the palace, but here his efforts had to be renewed, for the entrances were defended by bats, owls, and ravens; however, the Dragon, with his claws, his teeth and tail, cut to pieces even the boldest of these. The Queen, on her side, who was looking on at this fierce encounter, kicked away pieces of the wall, and armed herself with these to help her dear husband. They were at last victorious; they ran into one another's arms, and the work of disenchantment was completed by a thunderbolt, which fell into the lake and dried it up.

The friendly Dragon had disappeared with all the other monsters, and the King, by what means he could not guess, found himself again in his own capital, seated, with his Queen and Moufette, in a magnificent dining-hall, with a table spread with exquisite meats in front of them. Such joy and astonishment as theirs were unknown before. All their subjects ran in to see the Queen and the young Princess, who, to add to the wonder of it all, was so superbly dressed, that the eye could hardly bear to look upon her dazzling jewels.

It is easy to imagine the festivities that now went on at

the castle; masquerades, running at the ring, and tournaments attracted the greatest princes in the world; but even more were they attracted by the bright eyes of Moufette. Among those who were the handsomest and most accomplished in feats of arms, Prince Moufy everywhere was the most conspicuous. He was universally admired and applauded, and Moufette, who hitherto had been only in the company of dragons and serpents, did not withhold her share of praise. No day passed but Prince Moufy showed her some fresh attention, in the hope of pleasing her, for he loved her deeply; and having offered himself as a suitor, he made known to the King and Queen, that his principality was of a beauty and extent that deserved their special attention.

The King replied that Moufette was at liberty to choose a husband, and that he only wished to please her and make her happy. The Prince was delighted with this answer, and having already become aware that he was not indifferent to the Princess, offered her his hand. She assured him that if he was not her husband, no other man should be, and Moufy, overcome with joy, threw himself at her feet, and in affectionate terms begged her to remember the promise she had given him. The Prince and Princess were betrothed, and Prince Moufy then returned to his principality to make preparations for the marriage. Moufette shed many tears at his departure, for she was troubled with the presentiment of evil which she could not explain. The Queen, seeing that the Prince was also overcome with sorrow, gave him the portrait of her daughter, and begged him rather to lessen the magnificence of the preparations than to delay his return. The Prince, only too ready to obey such a command, promised to comply with what would be for his own happiness.

The Princess occupied herself during his absence with her music, for she had, in a few months, learnt to play well. One day, when she was in the Queen's room, the King rushed in, his face bathed in tears, and taking his daughter in his arms: "Alas, my child," he cried. "Alas!

wretched father, unhappy King!" He could say no more, for his voice was stifled with sobs. The Queen and Princess, in great alarm, asked him what was the matter, and at last he was able to tell them that a giant of an enormous height, who gave himself out to be an ambassador from the Dragon of the lake, had just arrived; that in accordance with the promise, made by the King in return for the help he had received in fighting the monsters, the Dragon demanded him to give up the Princess, as he wished to make her into a pie for his dinner; the King added that he had bound himself by solemn oaths to give him what he asked, and in those days no one ever broke his word.

When the Queen heard this dreadful news, she uttered piercing cries, and clasped her child to her breast. "My life shall be taken," she said, "before my daughter shall be delivered up to that monster; let him rather take our kingdom and all that we possess. Unnatural father! can you possibly consent to such a cruel thing? What! my child made into a pie! The thought of it is intolerable! Send me this terrible ambassador, maybe the sight of my anguish may touch his heart."

The King made no reply, but went in search of the giant and brought him to the Queen, who threw herself at his feet. She and her daughter implored him to have mercy upon them, and to persuade the Dragon to take everything they possessed, and to spare Moufette's life; but the giant replied that the matter did not rest with him, and that the Dragon was so obstinate and so fond of good things, that all the powers combined would not prevent him eating whatever he had taken into his head he would like for a meal. He further advised them, as a friend, to consent with a good grace, as otherwise greater evils might arise. At these words the Queen fainted, and the Princess, had she not been obliged to go to her mother's assistance, would have done the same.

No sooner was the sad news spread through the palace, than the whole town knew it. Nothing was heard but

weeping and wailing, for Moufette was greatly beloved. The King could not make up his mind to give her to the giant, and the giant, who had already waited some days, began to grow impatient, and to utter terrible threats. The King and Queen, however, said to each other, "What worse thing could happen to us? If the Dragon of the lake were to come and devour us all we could not be more distressed; if Moufette is put into a pie, we are lost."

The giant now told them that he had received a message from his master, and that if the Princess would agree to marry a nephew of his, the Dragon would let her live; that the nephew was young and handsome; that, moreover, he was a Prince, and that she would be able to live with him very happily. This proposal somewhat lessened their grief; the Queen spoke to the Princess, but found her still more averse to this marriage than to the thought of death. "I cannot save my life by being unfaithful," said Moufette. "You promised me to Prince Moufy, and I will marry no one else; let me die; my death will ensure the peace of your lives." The King then came and endeavoured with all the tenderest of expressions to persuade her; but nothing moved her, and finally it was decided that she should be conducted to the summit of a mountain, and there await the Dragon.

Everything was prepared for this great sacrifice; nothing so mournful had before been seen; nothing to be met anywhere but black garments, and pale and horrified faces. Four hundred maidens of the highest rank, dressed in long white robes, and crowned with cypress, accompanied the Princess, who was carried in an open litter of black velvet, that all might look on this masterpiece of beauty. Her hair, tied with crape, hung over her shoulders, and she wore a crown of jasmine, mingled with a few marigolds. The grief of the King and Queen, who followed, overcome by their deep sorrow, appeared the only thing that moved her. The giant, armed from head to foot, marched beside the litter, and looked with hungry eye

at the Princess, as if anticipating his share of her when she came to be eaten; the air resounded with sighs and sobs, and the road was flooded with the tears of the onlookers.

"Ah! Frog, Frog," cried the Queen, "you have indeed forsaken me! Alas! why did you give me help in that unhappy region, and now withhold it from me! Would that I had then died, I should not now be lamenting the loss of all my hopes, I should not now have the anguish of seeing my dear Moufette on the point of being devoured!" The procession meanwhile was slowly advancing, and at last reached the summit of the fatal mountain. Here the cries and lamentations were redoubled, nothing more piteous had before been heard. The giant ordered everyone to say farewell and to retire, and they all obeyed him, for in those days, people were very simple and submissive, and never sought for a remedy in their misfortunes.

The King and Queen, and all the Court, now ascended another mountain, whence they could see all that happened to the Princess: and they had not to wait long, before they saw a Dragon, half a league long, coming through the air. His body was so heavy that, notwithstanding his six large wings, he was hardly able to fly; he was covered with immense blue scales, and poisonous tongues of flame; his tail was twisted into as many as fifty and a half coils; each of his claws was the size of a windwill, and three rows of teeth, as long as those of an elephant, could be seen inside his wide-open jaw. As the Dragon slowly made his way towards the mountain, the good, faithful Frog, mounted on the back of a hawk, flew rapidly to Prince Moufy. She wore her cap of roses, and although he was locked into his private room, she entered without a key, and said, "What are you doing here, unhappy lover? You sit dreaming of Moufette's beauty, and at this very moment she is exposed to the most frightful danger; here is a rose-leaf, by blowing upon it, I can change it into a superb horse, as you will see."

There immediately appeared a horse, green in colour, and with twelve hoofs and three heads, of which one emitted fire, another bomb-shells, and the third cannon-balls. She gave the Prince a sword, eight yards long, and lighter than a feather. She clothed him with a single diamond, which he put on like a coat, and which, although as hard as a rock, was so pliable that he could move in it at his ease. "Go," she said, "run, fly to the rescue of her whom you love; the green horse I have given you, will take you to her, and when you have delivered her, let her know the share I have had in the matter."

"Generous fairy," cried the Prince, "I cannot at this moment show you all my gratitude; but henceforth, I am your faithful servitor."

He mounted the horse with the three heads, which instantly galloped off on its twelve hoofs, and went at a greater rate than three of the best ordinary horses, so that in a very little time the Prince reached the mountain, when he found his dear Princess all alone, and saw the Dragon slowly drawing near. The green horse immediately began to send forth fire, bomb-shells, and cannon-balls, which not a little astonished the monster; he received twenty balls in his throat, and his scales were somewhat damaged, and the bomb-shells put out one of his eyes. He grew furious, and made as if to throw himself on the Prince; but Moufy's long sword was so finely-tempered, that he could use it as he liked, thrusting it in at times up to the hilt, and at others using it like a whip; still he would have suffered from the Dragon's claws, had it not been for his diamond coat, which was impenetrable.

Moufette had recognised her lover a long way off, for the diamond that covered him was transparent and bright, and she was seized with mortal terror at the danger he was in. The King and Queen, however, were filled with renewed hope, for it was such an unexpected thing to see a horse with three heads and twelve hoofs, sending forth



fire and flame, and a Prince in a diamond suit and armed with a formidable sword, arrive at such an opportune moment, and fight with so much valour. The King put his hat on the top of his stick, and the Queen tied her handkerchief to the end of another, as signals of encouragement to the Prince; and all their Court followed suit. As a fact, this was not necessary, for his own heart and the peril in which he saw Moufette, were sufficient to animate his courage. And what efforts did he not make! the ground was covered with stings, claws, horns, wings, and scales of the Dragon; the earth was coloured blue and green with the mingled blood of the Dragon and the horse. Five times the Prince fell to the ground, but each time he rose again and leisurely mounted his horse, and then there were cannonades, and rushing of flames, and explosions, such as were never heard or seen before. The Dragon's strength at last gave way, and he fell; the Prince gave him a final blow, and nobody could believe their eyes, when from this last great wound, there stepped forth a handsome and charming prince, in a coat of blue and gold velvet, embroidered with pearls, while on his head he wore a little Grecian helmet, shaded with white feathers. He rushed, his arms outspread, towards Prince Moufy, and embraced him. "What do I not owe you, valiant liberator?" he cried. "You have delivered me from a worse prison than ever before enclosed a king; I have languished there since, sixteen years ago, the Fairy Lioness condemned me to it; and, such was her power, that she would have forced me, against my will, to devour that adorable Princess; lead me to her feet, that I may explain to her my misfortune."

Prince Moufy, surprised and delighted at this extraordinary termination to his adventure, showered civilities on the newly-found Prince. They hastened to rejoin Moufette, who thanked Heaven a thousand times for her unhoped-for happiness. The King, the Queen, and all the Court, were already with her; everybody spoke at once, nobody listened to anybody else, and they all shed

nearly as many tears of joy as they had before of grief. Finally, that nothing might be wanting to complete their rejoicing, the good Frog appeared, flying through the air on her hawk, which had little bells of gold on its feet. When the tinkle, tinkle, of these was heard, everyone looked up, and saw the cap of roses shining like the sun, and the Frog as beautiful as the dawn.

The Queen ran towards her, and took her by one of her little paws, and in the same moment, the wise Frog became a great Queen, with a charming countenance. "I come," she cried, "to crown the faithful Moufette, who preferred to risk her life, rather than be untrue to Prince Moufy." She thereupon took two myrtle wreaths, and placed them on the heads of the lovers, and giving three taps with her wand, all the Dragon's bones formed themselves into a triumphal arch, in commemoration of the great event which had just taken place.



They all wended their way back to the town, singing wedding songs, as gaily as they had before mournfully bewailed the sacrifice of the Princess. The marriage took place the following day, and the joy with which it was celebrated may be imagined.

When the Fay had finished all were agreed that her story was not a word too long, and all thanked her as she flew back with daintily fluttering little wings back to her place. All began wondering what the next story would be like. They did not have to wonder long for Titania,

turning to King Oberon, said, "I have chosen several stories, you choose now."

"I think," said Oberon, "that the Scandinavian Dwarf who told us our first tale about Thor and the wicked Loki could perhaps tell us another."

As soon as he spoke the Scandinavian Dwarf came forward, well pleased of course at being so honoured, and said, "I will tell your Majesty, then, a further tale of how it was that Thor managed to get the Heroes out of a nasty fix into which they had got themselves with a dwarf who lived in a dark underground place, who had made them promise that he should marry their most beautiful Freya. It is the story," he began, "of the ambition and undoing of





Allwise the Dwarf

ALLWISE the Dwarf once by his cunning wiles entrapped the Heroes into a promise that they would give him the beautiful Freya for his wife, and he set out from his cavern home for Asgard that he might claim fulfilment of the promise. Before leaving he gave orders to his servant dwarfs that they should deck the place against his return with the bride.

Now the Heroes of Asgard finding that they had been tricked into making a promise which they did not intend marvelled how they might spare themselves the fulfilling of it. Thor at length suggested that as Allwise would visit Asgard by night, and as he could not bear the sunlight, they should keep him engaged in talk until the sun rose, and what is more he offered to do this himself,

and so when the dwarf reached the city of the Heroes it was Thor whom he first encountered, and who hailed him thus: "What fellow art thou? Why art thou pale as if thou hadst come from among the dead? Surely thou art but a sorry bridegroom."

Then answered the dwarf: "Allwise my name is; I dwell in a cavern beneath the earth, and I am come to fetch my bride for the Heroes will not break their plighted word."

"I will break it," said Thor firmly, "for Freya is my ward, and I was not of those who made the promise to you. It is needful that I should hallow the weddings of the Heroes."

"Who is this fellow," said Allwise the dwarf scornfully, "who claims to control the fair-beaming maid?"

"Thor is my name," answered the Hero wrathfully, "I am Longbeard's son. I have travelled far. Without my will thou shalt never have the maid, or make this match."

"I would rather have thy good will; I would sooner win than want the snow-white maid."

"The maiden's love shall not be denied to thee, thou wise guest," said Thor with guile, "if thou canst tell me all that I want to know."

"That can I do," answered the dwarf confidently.

"Tell me, then, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest the whole history of mankind, how is the Earth, which lies about the sons of men, called by all different beings that are?"

"It is 'Earth' among men; 'Field' among the Heroes; the Wanes call it 'Way'; the Giants call it 'Ever-green'; the Elfs call it 'Growing,' and the High Gods call it 'Clay.'"

"Tell me, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest the whole history of mankind, how is Heaven called by all the beings that are?"

"It is 'Heaven' among men; 'Warmer' among the Heroes; the Wanes call it 'Wind-woof'; the Giants call

it 'High-home'; the Elfs call it 'Fair-roof'; and Dwarfs 'Drip-hall.'"

"Tell me, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest the whole history of mankind, how is the Moon that all men see called by all the beings that are?"

"It is 'Moon' among men; 'Mylin' among the Heroes; 'Whirling-Wheel' in Hell; 'Hastener' by the Giants; 'Sheen' by the Dwarfs; while the Elfs call it 'Year-teller.'"

"Tell me, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest the whole history of mankind, how is the Sun that all men see called by all the beings that are?"

"It is 'Sol' among men; 'Sun' among the Heroes; the Dwarfs call it 'Day's-child'; the Giants call it 'Ever-glow'; 'Fair-wheel' the Elfs"; and 'All-Sheer' the sons of the Anses."

"Tell me, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest the whole history of mankind, how are the clouds that are mingled with shadows called by all the beings that are?"

"'Sky' among men; 'Shower-boder' among the Heroes; 'Wind-floe' among the Wanes; 'Wet-boder' among the Giants; 'Weather-main' among the Elfs; and in Hell they call it 'Helm-of-Darkness.'"

"Tell me, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest the whole history of mankind, how is the Wind, that travels so far, called by all the beings that are?"

"'Wind' among men; 'Waverer' among the Heroes; 'Whooper' among the Giants; the Elfs call it 'Soft-Gale'; in Hell they call it 'Whistle-Gust.'"

"Tell me, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest the whole history of mankind, how is the Calm that rests called by all the beings that are?"

"'Calm' it is called among men; 'Lee' among the Heroes; the Wanes call it 'Wind-slack'; the Giants call it 'Sultry'; the Elfs 'Soul-of-Day'; and the Dwarfs 'Day's Rest.'"

"Tell me, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest



the whole history of mankind, what is the Main which men row over called by all the beings that are?"

"It is 'Sea' among men; 'Level' among the Heroes; 'Wave' among the Wanes; 'Sound-ham' among the Giants; the Elfs call it 'Sea-blink,' and the Dwarfs call it 'Deep.'"

"Tell me, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest the whole history of mankind, how is 'Fire' that burns before the sons of men called by all the beings that are?"

"It is 'Fire' among men; and 'Fire' among the Heroes; the Wanes call it 'Wavy;' 'Greedy' the Giants; 'Furnace fire' the Dwarfs; and in Hell they call it 'Destroyer.'"

"Tell me, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest the whole history of mankind, how is the Wood that grows before the sons of men called by all the beings that are?"

"It is 'Wood' among men; 'Wield-fire' among the Heroes; in Hell it is 'Cliff-wrack'; Giants call it 'Fire-wood'; the Elfs 'Fair-foliage'; and the Wanes call it 'Wand.'"

"Tell me, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest the whole history of mankind, how is Night, Norwis' daughter, called by all the beings that are?"

"'Night' among men; 'Newl' among the Heroes; 'Unlight' the Giants; 'Sleep-joy' the Elfs; and the Dwarfs call it 'Sleep-fairy.'"

"Tell me, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest the whole history of mankind, how is the Seed that the sons of men sow called by all the beings that are?"

"'Bigg' among men; 'Barley' among the Heroes; the Wanes call it 'Waxth'; 'Oat' the Giants; the Elfs 'Lees-staff'; in Hell it is 'Blight.'"

"Tell me, Allwise, for methinks thou, Dwarf, knowest the whole history of mankind, how is the Ale the sons of men drink called by all the beings that are?"

"'Ale' among men; 'Beer' among the Heroes; the Wanes call it 'Draught'; 'Clear-lees' the Giants; in Hell it is 'Mead'; while the Dwarfs call it 'Good cheer!'"

"Now," said Thor, "I never on one man's tongue saw more of the olden words, but with great wiles, oh, Allwise,

hast thou been beguiled, for the Day is upon thee, Dwarf; the hall is full of sunshine."

It was even as Thor said the day had come, and with it the Dwarf who had been kept in close talk without guessing why was suddenly turned into a figure of stone, and the Heroes were relieved of their rash promise to send the beautiful Freya from Asgard as wife of the dark-loving Allwise.



The Scandinavian Dwarf having resumed his place, Oberon turned to his Queen and said that her Nymphidia had given them all a very pretty little song, perhaps some of her attendants had stories they would like to tell.

"Of course they have," replied Titania, and turned to the fairies immediately about her throne, saying, "now who shall it be?"

Quick, as befitted her name, was the first to respond with, "If a very short story will do I can tell one," and Pink almost in the same breath said "I can tell one if a very short one will do."

Titania stopped the others who would have offered also, and said, "Quick and Pink shall tell them, then."

At once Quick took her place, and when all the fairy kingdom was attentive began to tell about



The Fairy at the Well

THERE was once a widow who had two daughters. The elder was so like her mother in temper and face, that to have seen the one was to have seen the other. They were both so disagreeable and proud, that it was impossible to live with them. The younger, who was the exact portrait of her father in her kindly and polite ways was also as beautiful a girl as one could see. As we are naturally fond of those who resemble us, the mother doted on her elder daughter, while for the younger she had a most violent aversion, and made her take her meals in the kitchen and work hard all day. Among other things that she was obliged to do, this poor child was forced to go twice a day to fetch water from a place a mile or more from the house, and carry back a large jug filled to the brim. As she was standing one day by this spring, a poor woman came up to her, and asked the girl to give her some water to drink.

"Certainly, my good woman," she replied, and the beautiful girl at once stooped and rinsed out the jug, and then, filling it with water from the clearest part of the spring, she held it up to the woman, continuing to support the jug, that she might drink with greater comfort. Having drunk, the woman said to her, "You are so beautiful, so good and kind, that I cannot refrain from

conferring a gift upon you," for she was really a fairy, who had taken the form of a poor village woman, in order to see how far the girl's kindheartedness would go. "This gift I make you," continued the fairy, "that with every word you speak, either a flower or a precious stone will fall from your mouth."

The girl had no sooner reached home than her mother began scolding her for being back so late. "I am sorry, mother," said she, "to have been out so long," and as she spoke, there fell from her mouth two roses, two pearls, and two large diamonds. The mother gazed at her in astonishment. "What do I see!" she exclaimed, "pearls and diamonds seem to be dropping from her mouth! How is this, my daughter?"—it was the first time she had called her *daughter*. The poor child related in all simplicity what had happened, letting fall quantities of diamonds in the course of her narrative. "I must certainly send my other daughter there," said the mother. "Look, Fanchon, see what falls from your sister's mouth when she speaks! Would you not be glad to receive a similar gift? All you have to do, is to go and fetch water from the spring, and if an old woman asks you for some to drink, to give it her nicely and politely." "I should like to see myself going to the spring," answered the rude, cross girl.

"I insist on your going," rejoined the mother, "and that at once."

The elder girl went off, still grumbling; with her she took the handsomest silver bottle she could find in the house.

She had no sooner arrived at the spring, than she saw a lady magnificently dressed walking towards her from the wood, who approached and asked for some water to drink. It was the same fairy who had appeared to the sister, but she had now put on the airs and apparel of a princess, as she wished to see how far this girl's rudeness would go. "Do you think I came here just to draw water for you?" answered the arrogant and unmannerly girl; "I have, of course, brought this silver bottle on purpose for madam to



drink from! Well, all I have to say is—drink from it if you like."

"You are scarcely polite," said the fairy, without losing her temper; "however, as you are so disobliging, I confer this gift upon you, that with every word you speak, a snake or a toad shall fall from your mouth."

Directly her mother caught sight of her, she called out, "Well, my daughter!" "Well, my mother!" replied the ill-tempered girl, throwing out as she spoke two vipers and two toads. "Alack!" cried the mother, "what do I see? This is her sister's doing, but I will pay her out for it," and, so saying, she ran towards the younger girl with intent to beat her. The unhappy girl fled from the house, and went and hid herself in a neighbouring forest. The King's son, who was returning from hunting, met her, and seeing how beautiful she was, asked her what she was doing there all alone, and why she was crying. "Alas! sir, my mother has driven me from home." The King's son, seeing five or six pearls and as many diamonds, falling from her mouth as she spoke, asked her to explain how this was, and she told him all her tale. The King's son fell in love with her, and thinking that such a gift as she possessed was worth more than any ordinary dower brought by another, he carried her off to his father's palace, and there married her.



As for her sister, she made herself so hated, that her own mother drove her from the house. The miserable girl, having gone about in vain trying to find someone who would take her in, crept away into the corner of a wood, and there died.

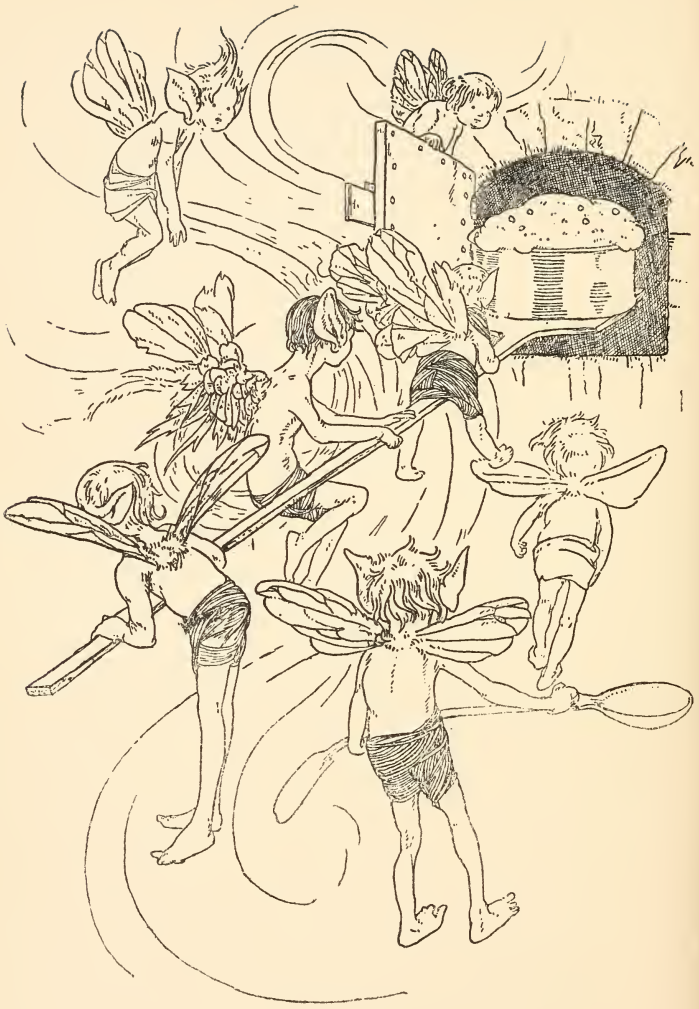
Of higher worth are gentle words
Than diamonds or gold,
And even o'er the minds of men
A greater power they hold.

It costs some pains to be polite,
And needs some kindly thought,
But soon or late, as here you see,
Reward will come unsought.

"I hope that Quick was short enough," said Titania, laughingly, and then turning to Pink said "and yours?"

"Will be shorter still, your Majesty," promptly answered Pink, stepping to the stool directly Quick had left it, and beginning at once the story of







Dolly, draw the Cake

At an early age St Dolly showed the sweetness of her nature by her tender love for her widowed father, a baker, dwelling at Pie Corner, with a large family of little children. It chanced that with bad harvests bread became so dear that, of course, bakers were ruined by high prices. The miller fell upon Dolly's father, and swept the shop with his golden thumb. Not a bed was left for the baker or his little ones. St Dolly slept upon a flour sack, having prayed that good angels would help her to help her father. Now sleeping, she dreamt that the oven was lighted, and she felt falling in a shower about her, raisins, currants, almonds, lemon peel, flour, with heavy drops of brandy. Then in her dreams she saw the fairies gather up the things that fell, and knead them into a cake. They put the cake into the oven, and dancing round and round, the fairies vanished, crying, "Draw the cake, Dolly — Dolly, draw the cake." And Dolly awoke and drew the cake, and, behold, it was the first Twelfth Cake, sugared at the top, and bearing the images of Faith, Hope and Charity. Now this cake, shown in the window, came to the king's ear; and the king bought the cake, and married Dolly to his



grand falconer, to whom she proved a faithful and loving wife, bearing him a baker's dozen of lovely children.

There was a general laugh at Pink's story, it was so *very* short, and Pink felt quite proud of herself in having got through her tale telling about twice as quickly as Quick.

"Only two more stories," said Oberon, "and then all must fly back to their proper work as fairies. There are so many of us here that would like to take a turn on the tale-teller's stool that it is now not easy to choose, so we will have our next story from the first fairy who can get on the stool—but wait," for as soon as Oberon spoke the rush began, "you must all go to your places and start fair when I say 'three.'" There was a pause while all settled back in their places, and then Oberon said slowly, "One—Two—Three."

As soon as the last word was heard there was such a scramble and rush from all parts of the ring, some running, some flying, but the nimblest of all was a Kobold, who seated himself firmly on the stool and would not let himself be pushed off. As soon as it was seen that the stool was occupied all the fairies who had tried to get there went laughing merrily back to their places, and the Kobold triumphantly began the story of





The Little Glass Shoe.

A PEASANT, named John Wilde, found one time a glass shoe on one of the hills where the little people used to dance. He clapped it instantly into his pocket and ran away with it, keeping his hand as close on his pocket as if he had a dove in it, for he knew that he had found a treasure which the underground people must redeem at any price.

Others say that John Wilde lay in ambush one night for the underground people, and gained an opportunity of pulling off one of their shoes, by stretching himself there with a brandy-bottle beside him, and acting like one that was dead drunk; for he was a very cunning man, not over scrupulous in his morals, and had taken in many a one by his craftiness, and, on this account, his name was in no good repute among his neighbours, who, to say the truth, were willing to have as little to do with him as possible. Many hold, too, that he was acquainted with forbidden arts, and used to carry on an intercourse with the fiends and old women that raised storms, and such like.

However, be this as it may, when John had gotten the shoe, he lost no time in letting the folk that dwell under the ground know that he had it. So at midnight he went

to the Nine-hills, and cried with all his might, "John Wilde of Rodenkirchen has got a beautiful glass shoe. Who will buy it, who will buy it?" For he knew that the little one who had lost the shoe must go barefoot till he got it again, and that is no trifle, for the little people have generally to walk upon very hard and stony ground.

John's advertisement was speedily attended to. The little fellow who had lost the shoe made no delay in setting about redeeming it. The first free day he got, that he might come out into the daylight, he came as a respectable merchant, and knocked at John Wilde's door, and asked if John had not a glass shoe to sell. "For," says he, "they are an article now in great demand, and are sought for in every market." John replied that it was true he had a very little little, nice, pretty little glass shoe, but it was so small that even a dwarf's foot would be squeezed in it, and that God Almighty must make people on purpose for it before it could be of any use, but that, for all that, it was an extraordinary shoe and a valuable shoe, and a dear shoe, and it was not every merchant that could afford to pay for it.

The merchant asked to see it, and when he had examined it, "Glass shoes" said he, "are not by any means such rare articles, my good friend, as you think here in Rodenkirchen, because you do not happen to go much into the world. However," said he, after hemming a little, "I will give you a good price for it, because I happen to have the very fellow of it." And he bid the countryman a thousand dollars for it.

"A thousand dollars are money, my father used to say when he drove fat oxen to market," replied John Wilde, in a mocking tone; "but it will not leave my hands for that shabby price, and, for my own part, it may ornament the foot of my daughter's doll. Harkye, friend; I have heard a sort of little song sung about the glass shoe, and it is not for a parcel of dirt that it will go out of my hands. Tell me now, my good fellow, should you happen to know the knack of it, that in every furrow I make when I am plough-

ing I should find a ducat. If not, the shoe is still mine, and you may inquire for glass shoes at those other markets."

The merchant made still a great many attempts, and twisted and turned in every direction to get the shoe, but when he found the farmer inflexible he agreed to what John desired, and swore to the performance of it.

Cunning John believed in him, and gave him up the glass shoe, for he knew right well with whom he had to do. So the business being ended, away went the merchant with his glass shoe.

Without a moment's delay, John repaired to his stable, got ready his horses and his plough, and drove out to the field. He selected a piece of ground where he would have the shortest turns possible, and began to plough. Hardly had the plough turned up the first sod, when up sprang a ducat out of the ground, and it was the same with every fresh furrow he made. There was now no end of his ploughing, and John Wilde soon bought eight new horses, and put them into the stable to the eight he already had—and their mangers were never without plenty of oats in them—that he might be able every two hours to yoke two fresh horses, and so be enabled to drive them the faster.

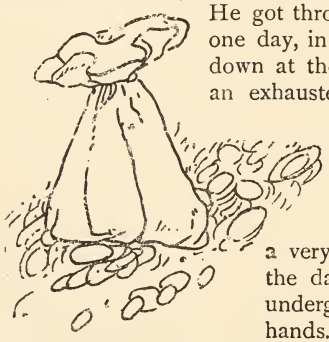
John was now insatiable in ploughing, every morning he was out before sunrise, and many a time he ploughed on till after midnight. Summer and winter it was plough, plough with him evermore, except when the ground was frozen as hard as a stone. But he always ploughed by himself, and never suffered any one to go out with him, or to come to him when he was at work, for John understood too well the nature of his crop to let people see what it was he ploughed so constantly for.

But it fared far worse with himself than with his horses, who ate good oats and were regularly changed and relieved, while he grew pale and meagre by reason of his continual working and toiling. His wife and children had no longer any comfort of him, he never went to the ale-house

or the club, he withdrew himself from every one, and scarcely ever spoke a single word, but went about silent and wrapped up in his own thoughts. All the day long he toiled for his ducats, and at night he had to count them and to plan and meditate how he might find out a still swifter kind of plough.

His wife and the neighbours lamented over his strange conduct, his dulness and melancholy, and began to think that he was grown foolish. Everybody pitied his wife and children, for they imagined that the numerous horses that he kept in his stable, and the preposterous mode of agriculture that he pursued, with his unnecessary and superfluous ploughing, must soon leave him without house or land.

But their anticipations were not fulfilled. True it is, the poor man never enjoyed a happy or contented hour since he began to plough the ducats up out of the ground. The old saying held good in his case, that he who gives himself up to the pursuit of gold is half way in the claws of the evil one. Flesh and blood cannot bear perpetual labour, and John Wilde did not long hold out against this running through the furrows day and night.



He got through the first spring, but one day, in the second, he dropped down at the tail of the plough like an exhausted November fly. Out of the pure thirst after gold he was wasted away and dried up to nothing whereas he had been a very strong and hearty man the day the shoe of the little underground man fell into his hands.

His wife, however, found after him a considerable treasure, two great nailed up chests full of good new ducats, and his sons purchased large estates for themselves,



and became lords and noblemen. But what good did all that do poor John Wilde.

"And now," said the King, "we come to our last story, and I think it shall be told us by the fairy who comes from the furthest North."

Several dwarfs and Elves started up at this word, but the King signalled them back to their places; "No," he said, "none of you is the one from farthest North." Then slowly up the middle of the circle came a quaint little figure all in white with long white hair and beard—looking, only of course the idea is ridiculous, like an *old* fairy. He had come from the land of perpetual winter, where everything is white as the everlasting snow, but though he looked old he was lively and youthful as the most frolicsome of the flower fairies there. He skipped briskly on to the stool, then passing his hand down his long white beard—strange guest where all was so brilliantly coloured—he began a story which he named





Once on a time there was a poor husbandman who had so many children that he hadn't much of either food or clothing to give them. Pretty children they all were, but the prettiest was the youngest daughter, who was so lovely there was no end to her loveliness.

So one day, 'twas on a Thursday evening late at the fall of the year, the weather was so wild and rough outside, and it was so cruelly dark, and rain fell and wind blew, till the walls of the cottage shook again. There they all sat round the fire busy with this thing and that. But just then, all at once, something gave three taps on the window-pane. Then the father went out to see what was the matter; and, when he got out of doors, what should he see but a great big White Bear.

"Good evening to you!" said the White Bear.

"The same to you," said the man.

"Will you give me your youngest daughter? If you

will, I'll make you as rich as you are now poor," said the Bear.

Well, the man would not be at all sorry to be so rich, but still he thought he must have a bit of a talk with his daughter first, so he went in and told them how there was a great White Bear waiting outside, who had given his word to make them so rich if he could only have the youngest daughter.

The lassie said "No!" outright. Nothing could get her to say anything else; so the man went out and settled it with the White Bear, that he should come again the next Thursday evening and get an answer. Meantime he talked his daughter over, and kept on telling her of all the riches they would get, and how well off she would be herself, so at last she thought better of it, and washed and mended her rags, made herself as smart as she could, and was ready to start. I can't say her packing gave her much trouble.

Next Thursday evening came the White Bear to fetch her, and she got upon his back with her bundle, and off they went. So when they had gone a bit of the way, the White Bear said:—

"Are you afraid?"

"No! she wasn't."

"Well! mind and hold tight by my shaggy coat, and then there's nothing to fear," said the Bear.

So she rode a long, long way, till they came to a great steep hill. There on the face of it the White Bear gave a knock, and a door opened, and they came into a castle, where there were many rooms all lit up, rooms gleaming with silver and gold, and there too was a table ready laid, and it was all as grand as grand could be. Then the White Bear gave her a silver bell, saying that if she rang it when she wanted anything she would get it at once.

Well, after she had eaten and drunk, and evening wore on, she got sleepy after her journey, and thought she would like to go to bed, so she rang the bell, and she had scarce taken hold of it before she came into a

chamber, where there was a bed made, as fair and white as any one would wish to sleep in, with silken pillows and curtains and gold fringe. All that was in the room was gold or silver, but when she had gone to bed, and put out the light, a man came and laid himself alongside her. That was the White Bear, who threw off his beast-shape at night, but she never saw him, for he always came after she had put out the light, and before the day dawned he was up and off again. So things went on happily for a while, but at last she began to get silent and sorrowful, for there she went about all day alone, and she longed to go home to see her father and mother, and brothers and sisters. So one day, when the White Bear asked what it was that she lacked, she said it was so dull and lonely there, and how she longed to go home to see her father and mother, and brothers and sisters, and that was why she was so sad and sorrowful, because she couldn't get to them.

"Well, well!" said the Bear, "perhaps there's a cure for all this, but you must promise me one thing, not to talk alone with your mother but only when the rest are by to hear, for she'll take you by the hand and try to lead you into a room alone to talk, but you must mind and not do that, else you'll bring bad luck on both of us."

So one Sunday the White Bear came and said now they could set off to see her father and mother. Well, off they started, she sitting on his back, and they went far and long. At last they came to a grand house, and there her brothers and sisters were running about out of doors at play, and everything was so pretty, 'twas a joy to see.

"This is where your father and mother live now," said the White Bear, "but don't forget what I told you, else you'll make us both unlucky."

"No! bless her, she'd not forget"; and when she had reached the house, the White Bear turned right about and left her.

Then when she went in to see her father and mother,

there was such joy, there was no end to it. None of them thought they could thank her enough for all she had done for them. Now they had everything they wished, as good as good could be, and they all wanted to know how she got on where she lived.

Well, she said, it was very good to live where she did; she had all she wished. What she said beside I don't know, but I don't think any of them had the right end of the stick, or that they got much out of her. But so in the afternoon, after they had done dinner, all happened as the White Bear had said. Her mother wanted to talk with her alone in her bedroom, but she minded what the White Bear had said, and wouldn't go upstairs.

"Oh! what we have to talk about will keep," she said, and put her mother off. But somehow or other, her mother got round her at last, and she had to tell her the whole story. So she said, how every night, when she had gone to bed, a man came and lay down beside her as soon as she had put out the light, how she never saw him, because he was always up and away before the morning dawned, and how she went about woeful and sorrowing, for she thought she should so much like to see him, and how all day long she walked about there alone, and how dull, and dreary, and lonesome it was.

"My!" said her mother; "it may well be a Troll you slept with! But now I'll teach you a lesson how to set eyes on him. I'll give you a bit of candle, which you can carry home in your bosom; just light that while he is asleep, but take care not to drop the tallow on him."

Yes! she took the candle, and hid it in her bosom, and as night drew on, the White Bear came and fetched her away.

But when they had gone a bit of the way, the White Bear asked if all hadn't happened as he had said.

"Well, she couldn't say it hadn't."

"Now, mind," said he, "if you have listened to your mother's advice, you have brought bad luck on us both, and then all that has passed between us will be as nothing."

"No," she said, "she hadn't listened to her mother's advice."

So when she had reached home, and had gone to bed, it was the old story over again. There came a man and lay down beside her; but at dead of night, when she heard he slept, she got up and struck a light, lit the candle, and let the light shine on him, and so she saw that he was the loveliest Prince one ever set eyes on, and she fell so deep in love with him, on the spot, that she thought she couldn't live if she didn't give him a kiss there and then. And so she did, but as she kissed him she dropped three hot drops of tallow on his shirt, and he woke up.

"What have you done?" he cried; "now you have made us both unlucky, for had you held out only this one year, I had been freed. For I have a stepmother who has bewitched me, so that I am a White Bear by day and a man by night. But now all ties are snapped between us, now I must set off from you to her. She lives in a castle which stands EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON, and there, too, is a Princess, with a nose three ells long, and she's the wife I must have now."

She wept and took it ill, but there was no help for it; go he must.

Then she asked if she mightn't go with him.

No, she mightn't.

"Tell me the way then," she said, "and I'll search you out; that surely I may get leave to do."

"Yes, she might do that," he said, "but there was no way to that place. It lay EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON, and thither she'd never find her way."

So next morning when she woke up both Prince and castle were gone, and then she lay on a little green patch, in the midst of the gloomy thick wood, and by her side lay the same bundle of rags she had brought with her from her old home.

So when she had rubbed the sleep out of her eyes, and wept till she was tired, she set out on her way, and

walked many, many days, till she came to a lofty rock. Under it sat an old hag, and played with a golden apple which she tossed about. Her the lassie asked if she knew the way to the prince, who lived with his stepmother in the Castle, that lay EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON, and who was to marry the Princess with a nose three ells long.

"How did you come to know about him?" asked the old hag; "but maybe you are the lassie who ought to have had him?"

Yes, she was.

"So, so, it's you, is it?" said the old hag. "Well, all I know about him is, that he lives in the castle that lies EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON, and thither you'll come, late or never; but still you may have the loan of my horse, and on him you can ride to my next neighbour. Maybe she'll be able to tell you; and when you get there, just give the horse a switch under the left ear, and beg him to be off home; and, stay, this gold apple you may take with you."

So she got upon the horse, and rode a long long time, till she came to another rock, under which sat another old hag, with a gold carding-comb. Her the lassie asked if she knew the way to the castle that lay EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON, and she answered, like the first old hag, that she knew nothing about it, except it was EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON.

"And thither you'll come, late or never, but you shall have the loan of my horse to my next neighbour; maybe she'll tell you all about it; and when you get there, just switch the horse under the left ear, and beg him to be off home."

And this old hag gave her the golden carding-comb; it might be she'd find the use for it, she said. So the lassie got up on the horse, and rode a far far way, and a weary time; and so at last she came to another great rock, under which sat another old hag, spinning with a golden spinning-wheel. Her, too, she asked if she knew the way to the

Prince, and where the castle was, that lay EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON. So it was the same thing again.

"Maybe it's you that ought to have had the Prince?" said the old hag.

Yes, it was.

But she, too, didn't know the way a bit better than the other two. "EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON it was" she knew—that was all.

"And thither you'll come late or never; but I'll lend you my horse, and then I think you'd best ride to the East Wind and ask him; maybe he knows those parts, and can blow you thither. But when you get to him, you need only give the horse a switch under the left ear, and he'll trot home of himself."

And so, too, she gave her the gold spinning-wheel. "Maybe you'll find a use for it," said the old hag.

Then on she rode many many days, a weary time, before she got to the East Wind's house, but at last she did reach it, and then she asked the East Wind if he could tell her the way to the Prince who dwelt EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON. Yes, the East Wind had often heard tell of it, the Prince, and the Castle, but he couldn't tell the way, for he had never blown so far.

"But, if you will, I'll go with you to my brother the West Wind, maybe he knows, for he's much stronger. So, if you will just get on my back, I'll carry you thither."

Yes, she got on his back, and I should just think they went briskly along.

So when they got there, they went into the West Wind's house, and the East Wind said the lassie he had brought was the one who ought to have had the Prince who lived in the castle EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON; and so she had set out to seek him, and how he had come with her, and would be glad to know if the West Wind knew how to get to the castle.

"Nay," said the West Wind, "so far I've never blown; but if you will I'll go with you to our brother the South

Wind, for he's much stronger than either of us, and he has flapped his wings far and wide. Maybe he'll tell you. You can get on my back and I'll carry you to him."

Yes! she got on his back, and so they travelled to the South Wind, and weren't so very long on the way, I should think.

When they got there, the West Wind asked him if he could tell her the way to the castle that lay EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON, for it was she that ought to have had the Prince who lived there.

"You don't say so. That's she, is it?" said the South Wind. "Well, I have blustered about in most places in my time, but so far have I never blown; but if you will, I'll take you to my brother the North Wind; he is the oldest and the strongest of the whole lot of us, and if he don't know where it is, you'll never find anyone in the world to tell you. You can get on my back, and I'll carry you thither."

Yes! she got on his back, and away he went from his house at a fine rate, and this time, too, she wasn't long on her way.

So when they got to the North Wind's house, he was so wild and cross, cold puffs came from him a long way off.

"NOW THEN, WHAT DO YOU WANT?" he bawled out to them ever so far off, so that it struck them with an icy shiver.

"Well," said the South Wind, "you needn't be so put out, for here I am, your brother, the South Wind, and here is the lassie who ought to have had the Prince who dwells in the castle that lies EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON, and now she wants to ask you if you ever were there, and can tell her the way, for she would be so glad to find him again."

"YES, I KNOW WELL ENOUGH WHERE IT IS," said the North Wind; "once in my life I blew an aspen-leaf thither, but I was so tired I couldn't blow a puff for ever so many days after it. But if you really wish to go

thither, and aren't afraid to come along with me, I'll take you on my back and see if I can blow you thither."

Yes! with all her heart; she must and would get thither if it were possible in any way, and as for fear, however madly he went, she wouldn't be at all afraid.

"Very well then," said the North Wind, "but you must sleep here to-night, for we must have the whole day before us if we're to get there at all."

Early next morning the North Wind woke her, and puffed himself up and blew himself out, and made himself so stout and big, 'twas gruesome to look at him; and so off they went, high up through the air, as if they would never stop till they got to the world's end.

Down here below there was such a storm; it threw down long tracts of wood and many houses, and when it swept over the great sea ships foundered by hundreds.

So they tore on and on—no one can believe how far they went—and all the while they still went over the sea, and the North Wind got more and more weary, and so out of breath he could scarce bring out a puff, and his wings drooped and drooped, till at last he sunk so low that the crests of the waves dashed over his heels.

"Are you afraid?" said the North Wind.

No! she wasn't.

But they weren't very far from land; and the North Wind had still so much strength left in him that he managed to throw her up on the shore under the windows of the castle which lay EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON; but then he was so weak and worn out, he had to stay there and rest many days before he could get home again.

Next morning the lassie sat down under the castle window and began to play with the gold apple; and the first person she saw was the Long-nose who was to have the Prince.

"What do you want for your gold apple, you lassie?" said the Long-nose, and threw up the window.

"It's not for sale for gold or money," said the lassie.



"If it's not for sale for gold or money, what is it that you will sell it for? You may name your own price," said the Princess.

"Well, if I may get to the Prince who lives here and be with him to-night, you shall have it," said the lassie whom the North Wind had brought.

Yes! she might; that could be done. So the Princess got the gold apple; but when the lassie came up to the Prince's bedroom at night he was fast asleep; she called him and shook him, and between whiles she wept sore; but all she could do she couldn't wake him up. Next morning, as soon as day broke, came the Princess with the long nose and drove her out again.

So in the daytime she sat under the castle windows and began to card with her golden carding-comb, and the same thing happened. The Princess asked what she wanted for it; and she said it wasn't for sale for gold or money, but if she might get leave to go up to the Prince and be with him that night, the Princess should have it. But when she went up, she found him fast asleep again, and all she called, and all she shook, and wept, and prayed, she couldn't get life into him; and as soon as the first gray peep of day came, then came the Princess with the long nose and chased her out again.

So, in the daytime, the lassie sat down outside under the castle window and began to spin with her golden spinning-wheel, and that, too, the Princess with the long nose wanted to have. So she threw up the window and asked what she wanted for it. The lassie said, as she had said twice before, it wasn't for sale for gold or money; but if she might go up to the Prince who was there, and be with him alone that night, she might have it.

Yes! she might do that and welcome. But now you must know there were some folk who had been carried off thither, and as they sat in their room, which was next the Prince, they had heard how a woman had been in there, and wept and prayed, and called to him two nights running, and they told that to the Prince.

That evening, when the Princess came with her sleepy drink, the Prince made as if he drank, but threw it over his shoulder, for he could guess it was a sleepy drink. So, when the lassie came in, she found the Prince wide awake; and then she told him the whole story how she had come thither.

"Ah," said the Prince, "you've just come in the very nick of time for to-morrow is to be our wedding-day; but now I won't have the Long-nose, and you are the only woman in the world who can set me free. I'll say I want to see what my wife is fit for, and beg her to wash the shirt which has the three spots of tallow on it; she'll say yes, for she doesn't know 'tis you who put them there; but that's a work only for Christian folk, and not for such a pack of Trolls, and so I'll say that I won't have any other for my bride than the woman who can wash them out, and ask you to do it."

So there was great joy and love between them all that night. But next day, when the wedding was to be, the Prince said:—

"First of all I'd like to see what my bride is fit for."

"Yes," said the stepmother, with all her heart.

"Well," said the Prince, "I've got a fine shirt which I'd like for my wedding-shirt, but somehow or other it has got three spots of tallow on it, which I must have washed out; and I have sworn never to take any other bride than the woman who's able to do that. If she can't she's not worth having."

Well, that was no great thing, they said, so they agreed, and she with the Long-nose began to wash away as hard as she could, but the more she rubbed and scrubbed, the bigger the spots grew.

"Ah," said the old hag, her mother, "you can't wash; let me try."

But she hadn't long taken the shirt in hand, before it got far worse than ever, and with all her rubbing, and wringing, and scrubbing the spots grew bigger and blacker, and the darker and uglier was the shirt.

Then all the other trolls began to wash, but the longer it lasted the blacker and uglier the shirt grew, till at last it was as black all over as if it had been up the chimney.

"Ah," said the Prince, "you're none of you worth a straw; you can't wash. Why there, outside, sits a beggar lassie, I'll be bound she knows how to wash better than the whole lot of you. Come in, lassie," he shouted.

Well, in she came.

"Can you wash this shirt clean, lassie, you?" said he.

"I don't know," she said, "but I think I can."

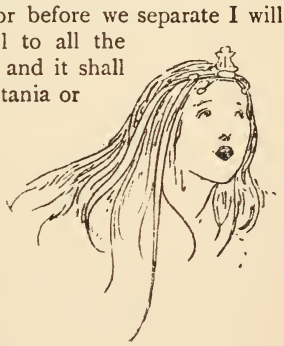
And almost before she had taken it and dipped it in the water, it was as white as driven snow, and whiter still.

"Yes; you are the lassie for me," said the Prince.

At that the old hag flew into such a rage she burst on the spot, and the Princess with the long nose after her, and the whole pack of Trolls after her—at least I've never heard a word about them since.

As for the Prince and Princess, they set free all the poor folk who had been carried off and shut up there, and they took with them all the silver and gold, and flitted away as far as they could from the castle that lay EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON.

"Not quite the last," exclaimed Queen Titania, and all the fairies who had begun to move hurried back to their places. "Not quite the last, for before we separate I will sing a song that you may tell to all the human children that you meet, and it shall be called the song of Queen Titania or





Queen Mab.

A LITTLE fairy comes at night,
Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown,
With silver spots upon her wings,
And from the moon she flutters down.

She has a little silver wand,
And when a good child goes to bed,
She waves her wand from right to left,
And makes a circle round its head.

And then it dreams of pleasant things,
Of fountains filled with fairy fish,
And trees that bear delicious fruit,
And bow their branches at a wish:

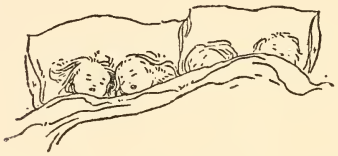
Of arbours filled with dainty scents
From lovely flowers that never fade;
Bright flies that glitter in the sun,
And glow-worms shining in the shade.



And talking birds with gifted tongues,
For singing songs and telling tales,
And pretty dwarfs to show the way
Through fairy hills and fairy dales.

But when a bad child goes to bed,
From left to right she weaves her rings
And then it dreams all through the night
Of only ugly horrid things.

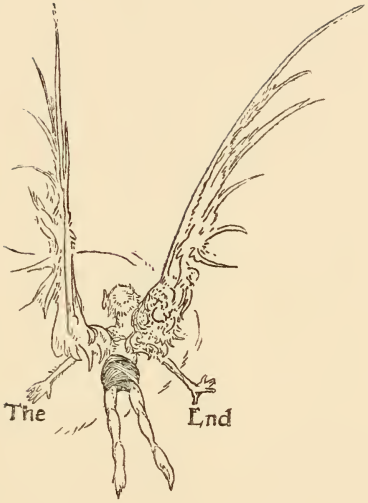
Then lions come with glaring eyes,
And tigers growl, a dreadful noise,
And ogres draw their cruel knives,
To shed the blood of girls and boys.



Then stormy waves rush on to drown,
Or raging flames come scorching round,
Fierce dragons hover in the air,
And serpents crawl along the ground.

Then wicked children wake and weep,
And wish the long black gloom away;
But good ones love the dark, and find
The night as pleasant as the day.

When the song was finished Oberon and Titania arose on their throne and faint strains of music were heard in the air; for a moment the whole place sparkled with light and colour, and then all the fairies had gone in a flash to their distant places, and nothing but a faint circle of darker grass showed where the great assembly had been. Away under a shady tree Nick Bottom and his companions were fast asleep, and when they awakened again they must have puzzled over what they had seen and heard, and which no doubt they believed that they had only dreamed. But we know better.


The
End

LETCHWORTH
THE TEMPLE PRESS
PRINTERS





